

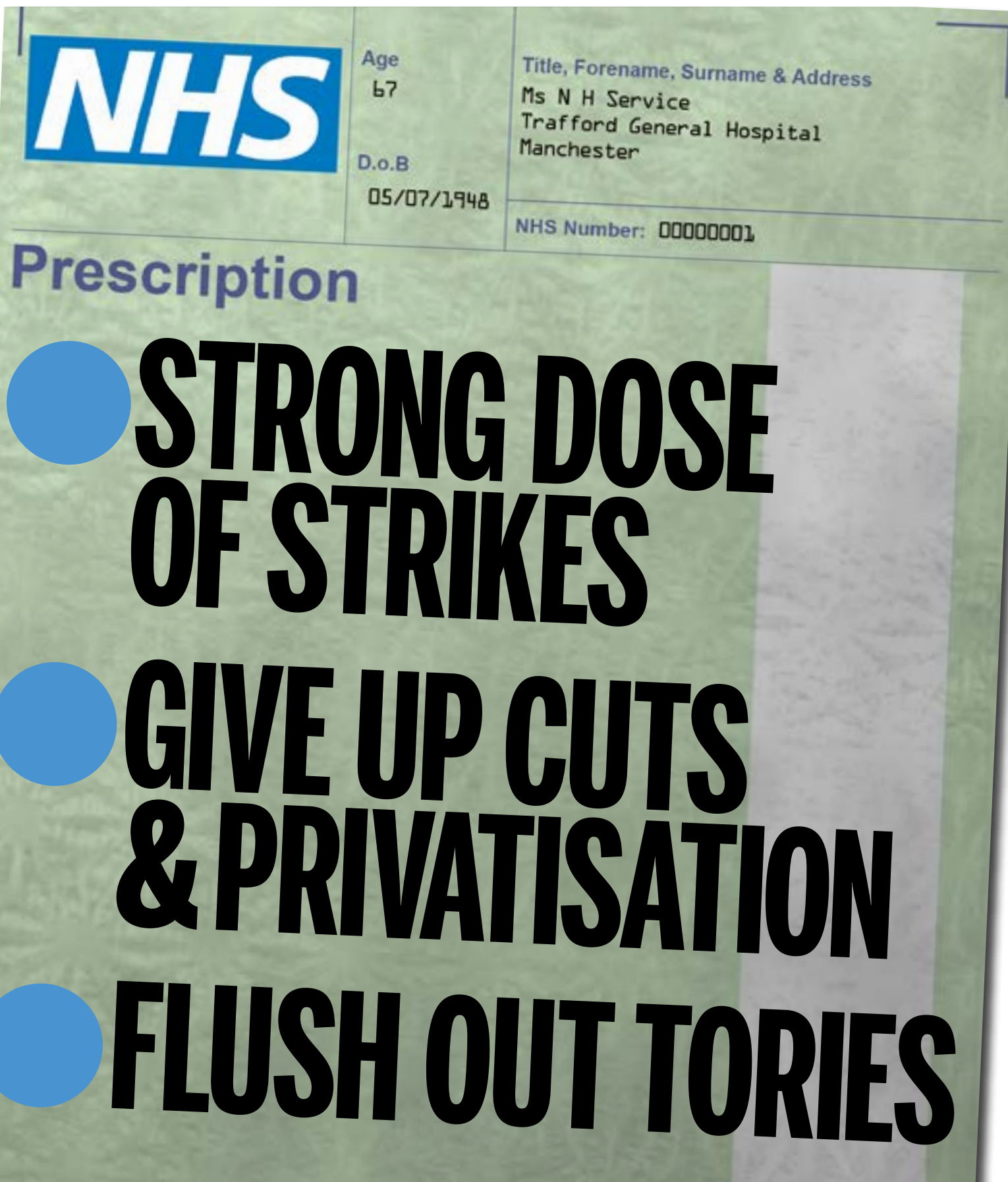
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PROTEST SATURDAY 19 MARCH

London ★ Glasgow ★ Cardiff ★ Called by Stand Up to Racism standuptoracism.org.uk >>Pages 6&7, 20



Socialist Worker

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**STRONG DOSE
OF STRIKES**

**GIVE UP CUTS
& PRIVATISATION**

FLUSH OUT TORIES

SUPPORT THE JUNIOR DOCTORS

SYRIA

Revolt and war in Syria—five years since the uprising

FIVE YEARS ago Syrians rose up against dictator Bashar al-Assad.

Socialist Worker explains how the revolution's defeat led to horror.

Razan Ghazzawi was in Damascus at the start of the revolution. Now in Britain, she told Anne Alexander what happened.

>>Pages 14&15

RESISTANCE



Fight against attacks on Women's Aid

CAMPAIGNERS IN Doncaster have warned against council plans to cancel funding for the Women's Aid domestic abuse support service.

The Labour-run council cut funding for the service three years ago. If Doncaster Women's Aid closes there will be no Women's Aid anywhere in South Yorkshire.

>>Page 17

EDUCATION

Scottish college lecturers vote for walkout

THOUSANDS OF lecturers in Scotland have delivered a thumping 93 percent vote for national further education college strikes.

The first walkouts are planned for 17 March, escalating after that.

>>Page 5



THE THINGS THEY SAY

‘This bloke spent 25 yrs attacking Labour from outside, then says this after 5 days inside. Who does he think he is?’

Labour whip **Conor McGinn** after PCS union leader Mark Serwotka said Labour Party members should choose MPs

‘Boris disappeared in a cloud of waffle’

The Sun's **Trevor Kavanagh** falls out with Boris

‘I happen to know she's a very keen litter picker... if she sees litter, she picks it up’

Tory TV host **Kirstie Allsopp** defends the Clean for the Queen campaign from critics who say it's patronising

‘I can only advise and warn’

The queen bemoans her inability to prevent same sex marriage

‘I don't want to scare you, but ... there will be consequences if the United Kingdom is to leave the EU’

French president **Francois Hollande** raises the stakes



Congratulations on your 82nd birthday—now you can retire!

“WORK UNTIL you drop” is the message from the government and private pension firms.

Ministers last week announced a radical review of pensions. The changes could hit anyone under the age of 55.

Tom McPhail, head of retirement policy at financial services giant Hargreaves Lansdown, said, “Those joining the workforce today are likely to find themselves waiting until their mid-70s to get a payout from the state system.”

The review will also consider ending a “universal” state pension age, instead basing it on different groups of workers and even regional living standards.

The excuse will be that this recognises that manual workers cannot work as long as others and that in some parts of Britain people die younger than others. In reality it will be a cover to divide people and jack up the pension age while also cutting the rate in some areas.

Meanwhile Royal London, the pensions firm, has published research suggesting that workers will need to retire

as late as 81 to enjoy the same standard of living as their parents.

The state pension age for women is already rising from 60 to 65 in line with men. Under present plans the pension age for all will rise to 66 between 2018 and 2020 and to 67 between 2026 and 2028. In Britain the modern pension system was introduced in 1948 with a pension age of 65 for men and

60 for women. Of course average life expectancy has (thankfully) increased between 1948 and today.

And the number of years the average person can expect to draw their pension has risen by about 50 percent. But the Office for National Statistics says, “The quantity of goods and services produced in the economy is now approximately four times larger than in 1948”.

EX-SPECIAL BRANCH top cop Richard Walton should have faced a misconduct probe over the Stephen Lawrence case.

He met an undercover officer spying on the Lawrence family during the 1998 public inquiry into into Stephen's 1993 murder.

But he quit six days after the IPCC watchdog revealed the details in January. Protest at the inquiry into undercover cops on 22 March. Go to bit.ly/21h1T8a

Richard Walton

COLUMNISTS proclaiming upon “the death of Twitter” clearly don't follow Labour MP Wes Streeting.

Streeting is proud to have tweeted on average once every 38 minutes for the last seven years.

That's almost as much time as he spends on his full time job briefing against Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn.

British golf clubs for British golfers?

WENTWORTH—ONE of more than 140 golf clubs in Surrey—was sold for £135 million in 2014.

Now the City financiers who make up its members are up in arms.

The Chinese company Reignwood that owns the club plans a one-off £100,000 fee from next year for existing members and to cut membership from about 4,000 to just 888 invitation-only places.

Ni Songhua the London boss of the company that own the club, said, “Members are talking to journalists and telling them we are socially cleansing the club and making way for Chinese Communist party members.”



As it happens, members of the Chinese Communist Party are banned from joining golf clubs.

Sir Michael Parkinson has denounced the plan to create a club with “a car park full of Lamborghinis”.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has expressed “disappointment” at the plans. One local resident said, “I hear they're going to have a riot about it—a posh people's riot.”

‘Right to buy’ made landlords richer

PRIVATE landlords now own 40 percent of all former council houses as “right-to-buy” fuels a buy-to-let boom.

Tory Margaret Thatcher's flagship policy of allowing council tenants to buy their properties cheap was supposed to increase home ownership.

Even more homes will be lost to landlords as the government gives 1.3 million housing association tenants the “right to buy”.

The

government is pushing councils to sell homes to cover cuts.

Some 67 percent of Milton Keynes' former social housing let by private landlords.

Over half of former social housing is rented out privately in six areas. They are:

- Milton Keynes, Bucks
- Ealing, West London
- Cheshire
- Castle Point, Essex
- Chesterfield
- Norwich



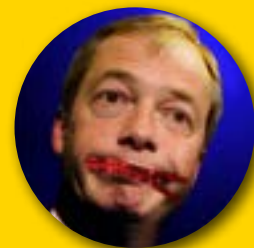
Figures were fiddled for rich

BUNGLING baron George Osborne told MPs that cutting the top rate of tax for the rich from 50p to 45p raised an extra £8 billion in tax revenue.

Now more did go on the tax in 2013-14, after the top rate in tax was cut. And the amount was indeed £8 billion.

But as the bosses' Financial Times predicted, “The increase is likely to be largely a result of wealthy taxpayers delaying taking bonuses and dividends until the rate cut took effect.” And that was what happened.

The tax cut for the rich served its purpose.



ZIP IT UKIP!

Alan Craig is a Ukup candidate for the London Assembly

● In 2011 he posted on his website “Confronting the Gaystapo” in which he likened the pressure groups Stonewall and OutRage! to the SS, and the Home Office to Sudetenland. He speculated that same-sex marriage “could be the invasion of Poland”

● Ukup's deputy chairman, Suzanne Evans, tried to have his candidacy annulled. Evans was sacked.

Complaints about the cops

MORE than 150 complaints have been made about police preying on vulnerable crime victims for sex, including rape victims.

In one case, Jordan Powell, from West Mercia Police, had sex with a domestic abuse victim while on duty. He was jailed for 15 months.

The IPCC police watchdog received 159 complaints between 2011 to 2015. Cases were uncovered by Radio5 Investigates, which could not reveal their outcome.

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Junior doctors need our solidarity in fight for NHS

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

SOLIDARITY FOR junior doctors was growing ahead of their planned 48-hour walkout this Wednesday against the imposition of a dangerous new contract.

Junior doctors in the British Medical Association (BMA) are set for a further two 48-hour walkouts on Wednesday 6 April and Tuesday 26 April.

Tory health secretary Jeremy Hunt has thrown down the gauntlet to the trade union movement. If the Tories get away with imposing this contract on junior doctors, they will attack other workers.

Janet Maiden, a nurse at UCH hospital in central London and on the Unison union's health service group executive, spoke to Socialist Worker in a personal capacity.

She said, "I walked around four wards gathering support for the walkout. Even among nurses who aren't in the union there was no question that we should support the junior doctors."

The task for activists is turning this widespread sympathy into practical solidarity. As Esther, a nurse in UCH, said, "We really need to be getting practical support and have a junior doctors' support group."

Walkout

Health workers and local trade unionists organised a 200-strong solidarity rally outside UCH during the last walkout in January.

They were building on that success with another rally planned for Wednesday at the hospital at 1pm.

Hunt claims the new contract is necessary to bring in "seven day working" to improve patient care—but the Tories' spin is unravelling.

Trying to justify his case, Hunt is using weekend death figures to say the present service causes more deaths.



STRIKING JUNIOR doctors with supporters at University College Hospital last month

PICTURE: JULIE SHERRY

But the authors of the report he relies on said, "The article does not refer to 6,000 excess deaths as quoted by Hunt."

They argued that it is "not possible to ascertain the extent to which these excess deaths may be preventable."

"To assume that they are avoidable would be rash and misleading."

Megan, a junior doctor in Manchester, explained, "The 'excess deaths' refers to people who've died within 30 days of being admitted between Friday and Monday."

"But that's because those admitted during the weekend are likely to be more ill. Hunt doesn't really care about excess deaths—15,000 died from fuel poverty last winter but he's not talking about that."

The NHS already provides emergency care 24/7 and junior doctors work long hours, including nights and weekends.

The new contracts would stretch five days' worth of resources across seven days. Hunt's real agenda is to smash health workers' pay and terms and conditions to soften the NHS up for privatisation.

Solidarity

That's why activists are organising support. Now the TUC and union leaders need to organise solidarity.

When the TUC called a 15-minute stoppage in solidarity with ambulance workers in 1990, workers across Britain struck.

Socialist Worker reported at the time that "every town saw some form

of protest ... 5,000 attended one central London rally alone."

At the very least, the TUC should organise a demo. Unison and the other health unions should immediately ballot members over their own issues.

And the Labour Party should get fully behind the strike, not meekly call for just more talks.

A win for the junior doctors will boost everyone's confidence to fight back and deal a blow to Tory austerity. The escalation to 48-hour strikes this week is a welcome step forward. The escalation must continue if Hunt doesn't back off.

Health worker meeting—How can we take the fight in the NHS forward? Saturday 12 March, 1-4pm, Room B111, Brunei Gallery, Soas, Thornhaugh St, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG

Nato forces on verge of new Libyan war

THE BRITISH, US and French governments are risking a new ground war in Libya.

They have already sent troops to protect oil fields and pipelines and positioned troops in neighbouring countries.

They are preparing to send thousands to Libya itself.

British troops are now "training" Tunisian soldiers on the Libyan border. And British special forces have been deployed to join US military counterparts in Libya.

The Tunisian state has said it is talking to Germany and the US about using drones on its Libyan border.

The US has already used drone strikes against Isis in

FIGURE IT OUT

10,000
dead in the first year of the civil war in Libya, a conservative estimate

£320 MILLION
amount Cameron spent on bombing Libya

£25 MILLION
amount Cameron spent on "rebuilding" Libya

Libya. France is conducting military exercises with Egypt in the Aegean Sea, close to Libya's eastern border.

The US is pressuring Italy to commit 5,000 troops to the operation.

Last month defence secretary Michael Fallon was asked in the Commons if he would guarantee MPs a debate "in advance of any decision to deploy UK Reaper aircraft outside Syria and Iraq".

The defence secretary replied, "No."

Isis has taken advantage of the chaos left after the Libyan civil war in 2011, which saw Nato forces tear apart the country.

Alistair Farrow

IN BRIEF

Pay to come dine with Tories

SOME 39 Tory donors paid a minimum of £50,000 each for the privilege of spending an evening with ministers.

The meals raised at least £1,950,000 between 1 October and 31 December last year for the party.

Tories' pension gift to the rich

GEORGE OSBORNE has stalled plans to reduce tax handouts to the rich when they top up their pension pots.

At present, the richest 8 percent of pension contributors get two thirds of the tax relief—over £20 billion.

Osborne suggested reducing their loot. The rich revolted. Osborne retreated.

Bosses evade 'living wage'

BOSSSES WILL claw back money from the Tories' "living wage" by cutting overtime and weekend pay when it comes in next month.

That's according recruiting agency Manpower.

Workers at Samworth Brothers are already fighting such plans (pages 10&11).

Lords passes benefit cuts

THE TORIES pushed their £30 a week cut to the benefits of thousands of sick and disabled people through the House of Lords on Monday. MPs used "financial privilege" to overrule the Lords.

ON THE WEB

Top five hits this week on www.socialistworker.co.uk

- 1 Syrians take to the streets under a fragile ceasefire
- 2 Thousand rally for Jeremy Corbyn in South Wales
- 3 Thousands-strong demo says 'Stop Turkey's war on Kurds'
- 4 Tories out! Marching on Trade Union Pride in Cardiff (video)
- 5 Lambeth campaigners tell Labour council, Dont steal our libraries

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More strikes needed in bitter campaign to defend union rep

by SADIE ROBINSON

BACK STORY

THE NUT leadership called off a strike at Small Heath School to defend victimised rep Simon O'Hara this week—while Simon remained suspended.

The news came on Tuesday of this week, the day that NUT union members at the school began their fourth three-day strike to demand Simon's reinstatement.

The NUT should have done the opposite—and escalated the action.

Bosses suspended Simon in January after he helped lead a series of walkouts against academisation.

Furious workers voted overwhelmingly to strike to defend their rep.

Strikers and the national union have always argued that Simon's suspension was simply an attempt to target an effective union rep.

Teachers have repeatedly showed their willingness to fight.

They overwhelmingly voted to escalate the strikes last week—but the NUT's national action committee would not agree to the plan.

But the strikers were right to back escalation to pile pressure on bosses.

Potential

There is huge support for Simon and real potential to build more. The mood on the picket line was upbeat on Tuesday of this week.

One striker told Socialist Worker, "Everybody's pretty chipper. More teachers are on the picket line from different schools. And we've had more parental support."

One supporter brought a camping stove to make strikers breakfast.

But strikers wanted their union leaders to make the dispute more high-profile.

One striker told Socialist Worker, "The more it's in the media, the more pressure there is on the head teacher. It means we go into negotiations feeling that we've got a bit more respect."

Raising the issue in other schools

Bosses at Small Heath School in Birmingham are on the offensive against trade unionists

● They suspended NUT union rep Simon O'Hara in January after he led a series of strikes

● Strikers have held three three-day so far strikes to demand his reinstatement

● Bosses want to weaken the union and push through attacks

● Rush messages of support to jo_simon@yahoo.co.uk and banut@btclick.com

rattled bosses and the local authority. Strikers were buoyed by a Birmingham NUT reps' meeting on Wednesday of last week.

One said, "I found the meeting very inspiring.

"The brilliant ideas other schools' union members came up with always awe me, thinking, 'Why didn't we think of that?' It strengthens us if others reassure us we are doing the right thing."

Simon spoke to around 110 people at a Sandwell Unison union meeting on Thursday of last week. He was "cheered to the rafters", one union member said.

And Simon spoke to a meeting of North Birmingham Momentum on Monday of this week.

People there were appalled at Labour MP Shabana Mahmood and Labour councillor Brigid Jones, who said workers are wrong to strike.

Birmingham NUT had called a national "Do Something For Simon" day on Wednesday 16 March.

All of this shows the scale of the support for Simon.

Simon's victimisation is not just about one rep (see below). It's about defending union rights.

The national union should make the fight at Small Heath a national fight. As one teacher put it, "This dispute can be won."

For updates on the dispute see socialistworker.co.uk



TEACHERS PICKET at Small Heath school in Birmingham

PICTURES: GUY SMALLMAN

SIXTH FORM STRIKE

'Let's show it's possible to fight cuts'

NUT UNION members in sixth form colleges across England are set to strike on Tuesday of next week. They are fighting the impact of Tory funding cuts on teachers' conditions—and want to stop the assault on education.

There is overwhelming support for the action. NUT members backed strikes by 86 percent on a turnout of 44 percent.

Further

NUT deputy general secretary Kevin Courtney said, "Funding has already been cut in real terms by 14 percent and further real terms cuts of 8 percent are planned.

"Colleges are dropping courses and increasing class sizes. If this situation is not reversed, many colleges will face closure."

Over 3,800 teachers across

93 colleges will be involved in the action. The union has called a national protest in London on the day and said it will fund transport so strikers can attend.

Tom Woodcock is an NUT rep and sixth form college teacher in Cambridge. He told Socialist Worker, "People are well aware that the strike is on. There's some anticipation about it because we'll be going to London to join the protest.

"The union is taking it seriously. NUT members have had emails, phone calls and texts about the dispute."

For Tom, 15 March can start a bigger fight to defend education. "All schools will be facing major funding cuts," he said, "We can show it's possible to fight over cuts. And if we reverse cuts to sixth form funding, that victory would be a beacon to other teachers."

Some sixth form colleges

will have lost a third of their funding in real terms between 2011 and 2016.

There's also a deeper agenda at work—to privatise education. The government's "area reviews" of 16-19 year old's education provision only look at further education and sixth form colleges.

Demand

The aim is to merge and close colleges and sixth forms across England. Where "demand" for sixth form provision exists, only a school, academy or free school sixth form can be created to meet it.

Every trade unionist should back the strikers and fight the cuts. Tom said, "We should push for a programme of national action. We need to get students involved, and we must build a campaign that can inspire other teachers to fight back too."

College pay battle is thrown away in a disastrous retreat

THE UCU union has ended its pay campaign for further education members.

The union's further education committee (FEC) met on Friday of last week and voted by two votes to end the campaign.

The decision follows an England-wide college strike by UCU and Unison union members on 24 February.

UCU general secretary Sally Hunt told a London rally on the day that the union should look to build alliances with other public sector unions.

UCU Left supporters argued that the UCU should strike alongside sixth form college workers in the NUT union on Tuesday of next week.

But Hunt rejected this proposal. She informed the FEC that if it voted to strike alongside the NUT she would override the decision.

The UCU Left called this a "very worrying



development for the democratic decision-making processes of our union".

It added, "The hard work put in by our members has been thrown away."

Workers were fighting a zero percent pay "offer" and demanding a rise of £1 an hour for all. The union's retreat will give bosses the green light to go on the offensive.

The FEC also opposed a call to hold an FE sector conference to discuss

a strategy for next year's pay campaign.

The UCU Left warned, "Some local branches are signing up to deals that gain extra pay at the expense of terms and conditions.

"This is a disastrous, dangerous and divisive strategy." Union activists should get their branch to support the call for a special FE conference.

Branches should pass motions calling for an escalating strategy over next year's pay claim.

Scots lecturers back walkout

THOUSANDS of lecturers in Scotland have delivered a thumping 93 percent vote for national further education college strikes.

The turnout in the EIS-Fela union ballot was 64 percent.

The first walkouts are planned for 17 March, escalating

to two days the next week then three days a week indefinitely.

The dispute, is about equal pay, defending education and collective bargaining. The Scottish National Party has slashed further education.

EIS-Fela president John Kelly told

Socialist Worker, "Lecturers have sent a very clear message to college management and to the government that they are not prepared to accept broken promises on national bargaining and equal pay."

Longer version at bit.ly/1LMBKMW

Morgan's attack on school funding will 'hit cities hard'

TORY education secretary Nicky Morgan has unveiled a new attack on school funding. She claimed a new "Funding Formula" will mean schools get funding that "genuinely matches their need".

But the NUT union said the proposals "will impose huge funding cuts on many schools unless additional funding is made available".

NUT general secretary Christine



Tory Nicky Morgan

Blower cited figures showing that "schools in many cities would be hit particularly hard".

She accused the

government of "trying to avoid disclosing the cuts facing London schools in advance of the Mayoral election. None of our schools is over-funded, so reallocating inadequate resources will simply shunt funding problems around the school system."

The Tory plan also means local authorities would no longer be involved in the process of school funding.

Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

TAKE BACK HOUSING FROM THE TORIES AND THE RICH

POLITICIANS are queuing up to admit that there's a chronic housing crisis—but no amount of hand wringing will absolve them for causing it.

The Tories' Housing and Planning Bill declares all-out war on working class people's right to council housing. It will force more tenants out of council and social housing and into extortionate private-rented accommodation.

Since Margaret Thatcher, the Tories have masked their attacks on housing with talk about helping ordinary people to own their own homes.

Grab

The truth is nothing to do with "aspiration"—it's a property grab for their developer mates.

While the rich take each other to court over luxury extensions, working class people are being forced out of their homes.

The London mayoral candidates' policies are woefully inadequate on the housing crisis.

For Tory Zac Goldsmith, the only way is up. He's talked about building more storeys on public buildings such as Tube stations. Labour's Sadiq Khan has floated

setting up a not-for-profit lettings agency to take on rogue landlords.

Others also talk about making it easier to build on public land or devolving planning powers.

But they're just tinkering around the edges because they refuse to address what's behind the crisis.

The Guardian newspaper reports that house building has hit a "seven-year high"—but that's still 22 percent down from before the global crash in 2008.

The Tories boast that 143,560 homes were started and 142,890 completed in 2015.

But that's "nowhere near" the quarter of a million new homes needed every year in England

Solving this crisis means breaking with the market—not further entrenching it

alone, housing charity Shelter points out.

In London there's plenty of building. The problem is that most people will never afford these new luxury flats.

Many can't dream of buying a home and are forced to pay through the nose for gruesome hovels owned by 21st century slum landlords.

Profit

Solving this crisis means breaking with the market—not entrenching it further. Homes should be a right, not a commodity bought and sold for profit.

There needs to be a government-led programme of mass council house building—creating jobs and hundreds of thousands of homes.

Greedy investors should not be allowed to sit on empty homes.

The Tories' latest attack has ignited the struggle involving tenants, renters and campaigners.

This shows the potential to build a mass movement that can reclaim housing for ordinary people.

Kill the Housing Bill protest, Sunday 13 March. Assemble 12pm Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A

FIGHT THE SEXIST SYSTEM

INTERNATIONAL Women's Day this week brought a slew of articles showing how women's oppression is still a reality.

The International Labour Organization declared that women have only seen "marginal improvements" at work over the past 20 years. A survey for a coalition of women's organisations showed that seven out of ten women in Britain had suffered unwanted sexual comments in a public place.

Those questioned said

"society" was the biggest barrier to gender equality. They are right to see the problem as systemic.

Bosses still pay women less than men doing the same job.

Women with children face particular discrimination at work.

Men are more likely to be in top jobs. Women still bear most of the burden of housework and childcare. New figures showed that five women are killed every hour across the globe by partners or family members.

But the news isn't all bad.

Anger at women's oppression repeatedly politicises generations of women to fight back. Struggles by ordinary women, and men, have won real changes.

These changes, such as more rights at work or increased access to abortion, also help challenge attitudes about women's place in the world.

Ultimately women's oppression is part and parcel of capitalism—and another reason why we need to fight oppression and get rid of capitalism itself.

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Bosses try to weaken unions

SIMON O'HARA is an effective union rep. He won an NUT award last year for organising the Small Heath anti-academy campaign.

Bosses have targeted him because they want to weaken the union and push through attacks.

A defeat at Small Heath would give bosses everywhere a



Award-winning NUT union rep Simon O'Hara

green light to go on the offensive.

One sign of what's at stake came from John Roan school in Greenwich, south east London. NUT members there are preparing for action against a proposed academy conversion.

Now bosses are threatening job losses—including the NUT rep.

ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



Republican voters could trump elites

DONALD TRUMP'S sweeping victories in the US primary elections on "Super Tuesday"—last week—has thrown the Republican Party into "a state of pandemonium", according to the Washington Post newspaper.

Horried by Trump's success in laying waste to his rivals for the Republican presidential nomination, party grandees are mobilising in a last-minute effort to stop him.

Mitt Romney, who unsuccessfully ran against Barack Obama in 2012, has denounced Trump as a "fraud". Money is being poured into attack ads in the states where primaries have still to take place. Katie Packer of Our Principles, a stop-Trump operation funded by the billionaire Ricketts family, told the Post, "We have a very target-rich environment. He has left quite a wake of victims in his path."

The panic about Trump isn't confined to the other side of the pond. Martin Wolf, chief commentator for the Financial Times newspaper, declared last week, "The US is the greatest republic since Rome, the bastion of democracy, the guarantor of the liberal global order. It would be a global disaster if Mr Trump were to become president."

Wolf put his finger on the key issue. The Republican establishment represented by Romney and two of Trump's hapless opponents, Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio, broadly support the strategy pursued by US imperialism since the Second World War. This is to build an international network of alliances underpinned by US military power to maintain a global liberal capitalist order through which capital and commodities can freely flow.

Trump is challenging this order. Apart from wanting to build a wall along the border with Mexico, he is promising to force US corporations such as Apple to repatriate their production from China and other low-wage economies. He has also questioned the worth of the US alliance with Japan.

This is anathema to the mainstream of the US ruling class. Sixty Republican foreign policy experts last week signed a letter saying Trump was unfit to be president.

General Michael Hayden, George W Bush's last director of the Central Intelligence Agency, has warned that US military commanders might disobey his orders if they violated international law.

Tradition

Trump's general stance is in fact quite recognisable to anyone familiar with US political history. It is an example of what the Republican commentator Walter Russell Mead has called the Jacksonian tradition. Andrew Jackson, president 1829-37, was very happy to use force to expand the US, notably against the Native Americans. But he was also a populist opponent of Wall Street and suspicious of foreigners.

Jackson was president of the US when it was still pushing out from the eastern seaboard and was an economic semi-colony of Britain. Remarkably, Trump has revitalised this brand of aggressive nativism, racism, and populism in the very different circumstances of 2016, when the US is the dominant capitalist state.

The fundamental reason for his success is obvious enough, and it's what drives Bernie Sanders's campaign for the Democratic nomination—the state of the US economy. Real household median income is the same as it was 20 years ago.

The mortality rate among middle-aged white men is rising. No wonder Trump says, "I love the poorly educated." They are the chief victims of an economic crisis that a majority of people in the US believe is still going on.

David Perdue, Republican senator for Georgia, said, "The main pendulum in American politics is no longer swinging from left to right. It's swinging between insiders and outsiders." If true, this poses a big problem for the party establishment.

If they succeed in slowing down Trump's advance and denying him the nomination at the party convention in July, they may well be punished by the voters who rallied to him.

But it's a problem for Trump as well. Scenting victory, he's already starting to clean up his act. On Friday of last week he issued a statement promising to be guided by international law in the orders he would give the military as president.

But if he abandons his utopian promises to shut the US off from global trade and migration, he will be betraying his supporters. Where will they turn next?

Cameron sinks deeper into the sewer to block refugees

by DAVE SEWELL

IRANIAN refugees on hunger strike led a 70-strong protest in the Calais "jungle" shantytown against its demolition on Monday. It was the fifth day of hunger strikes.

Protesters held signs saying, "European countries, where are our human rights?" and, "Don't destroy our living space".

A Sudanese refugee on the protest had been on hunger strike in a closed centre in Lampedusa, Italy, in December, demanding the right to move on.

He said, "I think I was born to struggle, it is normal that everyone has dreams and we should fight and struggle to see them done."

Amid a layer of snow, demolition restarted after a weekend pause.

One hunger striker said refugees "are looking for peace, they are looking for a place to be safe". Another added, "The police woke us, forced us to leave our shelters and then destroyed them."

Attacks

"Our situation here in France is so sad, because of the destruction of the jungle but also because of attacks from racists and fascists."

Regional authorities claim to have cleared over a quarter of the jungle's southern section last week where as many as 3,000 people lived.

Some refugees have gone into the government camp of white shipping containers and a "temporary" array of official blue tents. Alternatives leave them at risk of homelessness, being deported from France



or losing their chance to apply for asylum in Britain.

After overcoming opposition from the higher levels of the state, Dunkirk authorities opened the first refugee camp in France to meet international norms this week. Some in Calais could end up there.

But it has only 1,050 places—not even enough for the refugees living in squalid conditions in Dunkirk's own

CAMERON WONDERS (above) if Hollande's fences to trap refugees in Calais (left) are high enough

Grande Synthe camp.

On Monday Calais mayor Natasha Bouchart, regional president Xavier Bertrand and ten coachloads of mostly small business owners protested in Paris to demand tax breaks as compensation for refugees supposedly ruining the town.

Racist

David Cameron and French president Francois Hollande have used racist scaremongering about Calais to argue against Britain leaving the European Union (EU).

They have argued that without the EU, the agreement that lets Britain have its border controls in France would be revoked.

Bertrand said, "Right away the border will leave Calais

and go to Dover. We will not continue to guard the border for Britain if it's no longer in the European Union."

But the agreement is unrelated to the EU, and France's government is doing all it can to make it harder, not easier, for refugees to reach Britain through Calais.

At Hollande and Cameron's meeting last week another £17 million funding was announced to pay France to do the Tories' dirty work.

Whichever side of the Channel it is on, it's Britain's border that traps refugees in Calais at the mercy of cops, bulldozers, fascists and freezing weather.

The only meaningful solution is to open it and let the refugees in.

Surviving war but not Calais 'jungle'

A SUDANESE man died of a heart attack in the Calais "jungle" last week, a charity reported. Living conditions are dire and access to healthcare limited.

A charity said, "He survived the bombs of his country, the storms and dangers of the sea, the greedy traffickers, the long days on foot fleeing a country at war."

"But he didn't survive the Calais 'jungle'. Dead in the country of human rights surrounded by helmeted riot cops."

Medical volunteers



A riot cop in the "Jungle"

told the Independent newspaper that they treated seven boys under 16 who said they had been raped, with injuries consistent with their claims.

Up to 500 child refugees are stuck in Calais, unaccompanied with thousands more like them across Europe.

Many are in Calais trying to join family in Britain and could legally claim asylum, but are living in very dangerous situations when they could be safely with their families in Britain.

FIGURE IT OUT

410

number of refugees and migrants who have died or gone missing crossing the Mediterranean in 2016

132,940

number who have arrived in Europe via the Mediterranean in January and February 2016

937

percent rise in the number crossing in January and February this year compared to the same two months last year

This horror must be challenged —step up fight against racism

Meetings across Britain have shown the potential to build big anti-racist demonstrations on 19 March—now it's time for the final push to show that Britain says 'refugees welcome here'

SOME 130 people attended a Stand Up To Racism meeting in Norwich last Friday where there was standing room only.

Trade unionists, anti-racists, refugee support groups, agencies such as the Red Cross, political parties and religious groups took part.

The local Norfolk County Council has agreed to take in just 50 refugees as part of David Cameron's grossly inadequate pledge of allowing 20,000 Syrians in over four years.

But so far no refugee has been housed in Norfolk. The meeting is part of a drive to hold the politicians to account.

The next day a similar meeting took place in Lancaster backed by the local trades council. Speakers included MP Cat Smith who slammed the government's Prevent strategy that forces public sector workers to spy for signs of "radicalisation" and targets Muslims.

Agenda

"Teachers do not feel they should be the police for the state's Prevent agenda," she said.

Hundreds of people went to eight meetings on Thursday of last week. Around 120 people came to the meeting in Haringey, north London.

In Leicester Labour councillor Diane Cank argued against scapegoating. "Refugees flee wars—they don't come here to take benefits," she said. Teacher Sara Tomlinson reported back from a recent trade union delegation to the Calais refugee camp. "We must let the refugees in Calais into Britain," she said.

In Nottingham former Guantanamo Bay prisoner Moazzam Begg told an audience of more than 50, "Islamophobia is not born it's taught, and it's the government and media doing the teaching."

A meeting of 120 in Tower Hamlets, east London, united leading figures from both sides of last year's bitterly contested mayoral election.

Other speakers included Leon Silver from the East London Central Synagogue who said he wouldn't be here today if his parents hadn't been allowed into Britain as refugees from the Holocaust.

In Doncaster junior doctor Megan Parsons said the NHS had been founded on the work of migrants. Nazia Fattar talked about the horrors women asylum seekers face in the Yarl's Wood



REFUGEES TRAPPED at the northern Greek border station of Idomeni bust open the border fence

detention centre, where protesters are set to rally this Saturday.

Other meetings took place that night in Derby, Leeds and Liverpool. Around 80 people joined a Stand Up to Racism rally in Edinburgh last Wednesday.

The audience was very young and included people from the Muslim Women's Association, Momentum, migrant groups and Greek and Spanish activists.

Gagging

On the previous night 75 people joined a rally in Cambridge. Dan Ellis from the Cambridge Calais Action Group talked movingly about working with refugees.

NUS Black Students Officer Malia Bouattia said the Prevent agenda is gagging Muslim students. Over 100 people rallied in Manchester and 60 in Lewisham, south east London.

It will take a mass movement to beat the clampdown on Muslims and the lockout of refugees—and across Britain mobilising for the demos is helping to build one.

MEDITERRANEAN

Nato ships are not about safety

ANOTHER 25 people drowned crossing the Aegean Sea between Greece and Turkey last Sunday when the boat carrying them to Europe sank. Three children were believed to be among the dead.

Refugee numbers crossing the Mediterranean in 2016 have dramatically increased.

The Tories have responded by sending in ships to join a Nato taskforce. Defence secretary Michael Fallon said this week that the ship Mounts Bay, its Wildcat attack helicopter and two Border Force patrol vessels will join one vessel already there.

They will intercept refugees' small dinghies and turn them back. And they will spy on the places they sail from to help Turkish authorities intercept them before they leave.

This is no rescue mission. David Cameron said the aim is to "send out a clear message to migrants contemplating journeys to Europe that they will be turned back".

Restrictions

As with all the restrictions Cameron and other European leaders have placed on refugees, he claims this will make them safer. Cameron claims that if the EU can "break the business model of the criminal smugglers", the refugees will stop coming.

But it has nothing to do with refugees' safety.

Volunteers rescuing refugees from shipwrecks risk prosecution as people traffickers. If refugees' safety was an issue Greek ferries already in the area could bring them across. Or they could simply be allowed across the land border.

Denying refugees the right to use safe routes is what forces them to risk the crossing in dinghies. This is also precisely what sustains the "business model of the criminal smugglers".

If Nato succeeds in blocking off the main routes across the Aegean—such as that between Izmir in Turkey and the Greek island Lesbos—it will only drive people onto longer or more isolated and deadlier routes.

GREECE

Trapped by Fortress Europe

OVER 14,000 people are trapped at Greece's northern border with Macedonia and over 30,000 in Greece as a whole due to a vicious blockade to stop refugees.

Macedonia's government, backed by Austria, has progressively restricted access to more and more select categories.

It reportedly now only allows through Syrians who can prove they are from cities at war.

The capital Damascus, which is held by the brutal Syrian dictatorship, is among those that don't count.

And the closure is enforced through vicious beatings and teargas by a multinational border police force.

Greece's left wing Syriza

government reached an agreement with right wing opposition parties last week that will return many refugees to prison-like detention centres.

Those refugees who are "genuine" can be housed in "open centres" where they are free to come and go.

Yet there are far from enough places. Most face homelessness.

But ordinary people are organising to help them and bring solidarity.

Around 10,000 people turned up with donations to a collection of supplies for refugees outside the Greek parliament in the capital Athens last weekend, organisers report.

Protests in Syria break out under ceasefire

Fresh protests against the Assad regime show the spirit of revolution lives on, writes Jad Bouharoun

THOUSANDS OF people took to the streets across Syria in lively demonstrations on Friday of last week.

The protests were reminiscent of the popular movement that started the revolution five years ago (see pages 14&15).

They come after a fragile ceasefire, negotiated by the US and Russia in Munich, had come into effect a few days before.

Benefiting from the ceasefire, people organised peaceful protests in more than a hundred different localities in the liberated areas.

Protests took place in areas such as Aleppo, Idlib and the Damascus suburbs and countryside as well as Deraa and Homs

The ceasefire is the first nationwide truce—although it excludes Isis and Jabhat al-Nusra—since the beginning of the armed conflict in 2011.

Virtually every area not controlled by either the dictator Bashar-al Assad or Isis saw a protest.

The slogans echoed those of the 2011 uprising. They called for the overthrow of Assad in favour of a free, democratic and united Syria.

Like in 2011, the placards and chants expressed a rejection of religious sectarianism and foreign intervention.

Downfall

In the city of Douma some protest signs echoed the slogan that swept the Arab world in 2011—"The people want the downfall of the regime."

Soldiers from Jabhat al-Nusra, a Jihadist armed group, attempted to confront protesters near Idlib. A few of them showed up with black Islamic flags, chanting slogans rejecting secularism and democracy, but they were dismissed by protesters.

Ridiculously, the regime's state media recycled its 2011 lies by claiming that protesters were paid by foreign agents.

Unfortunately the regime's devastation machine is more

BACK STORY

Civil war has raged in Syria since the Assad regime crushed a revolt that began in 2011

● Imperialist powers the US and Russia have backed different groups and launched airstrikes

● A fragile ceasefire is in place, and Syrians took to the streets once more last Friday

● The protests come ahead of the uprising's fifth anniversary

● Syrian revolutionary Razan Ghazzawi recalls the first days of the revolution on pages 14&15

effective than its media.

Millions of Syrians remain vulnerable to barrel bombs and artillery strikes should the frail ceasefire collapse.

The protests show that in spite of the years of civil war and devastation the ideals of the 2011 uprising still inspire many across the country.

It is a testament to the deep effect that the revolution has had on Syrian society before it was defeated by Assad's repression.

Hundreds of thousands in Syria took part in peaceful protests as part of the Arab revolutions in 2011.

But the Assad regime's barbaric repression forced the popular movement to retreat.

It ignited a civil war which opened the door to foreign intervention by international powers as well as jihadist armed groups.

The Assad regime conducted daily bombing and shelling on the besieged cities and villages in the areas of Syria that it abandoned. The assault spread devastation throughout the country.

Last Friday's demonstrations serve as a reminder of the values of freedom and solidarity that drove the uprising in 2011.

But they must also remind us that only a mass movement by ordinary Syrians can ensure that those values triumph once the war has ended.

Kurdish solidarity



THOUSANDS PROTESTED in London last Sunday to say 'Stop Turkey's war on the Kurds'. For a full report go to bit.ly/1La4sXZ

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Nazi breakthrough in Slovak election

by TOMÁŠ TENGEY-EVANS

FASCISTS AND the racist right made big gains in Slovakia's general election last Saturday.

The Direction—Social Democracy party lost their ruling majority.

The election comes as Slovakia prepares to take over European Union (EU) presidency.

The Social Democrats plummeted from 44.4 percent in the 2012 general election to 28.3 percent.

Their promise of moderating the free market was based on being part of a "social" EU.

But Slovakia's export-driven economy is tied to Germany and

the EU austerity drive.

With their project tanking, the Social Democrats turned to the right.

Prime minister Robert Fico talked of protecting the "traditional family".

He then refused to take in any refugees and whipped up racism.

On an already existing bedrock of anti-Roma racism, this paved the way for the Nazis to win seats for the first time.

The fascist People's Party—Our Slovakia saw its vote shoot up from 1.8 percent in the 2012 general election to 8 percent.

They will have a commanding stake in choosing the next coalition along with the racist Slovak National Party.

A uniformed supporter of the fascist People's Party—Our Slovakia

FIGURE IT OUT

10 percent

The current unemployment rate in France

1,000,000

People who have signed a petition against a new law helping bosses make workers in France work longer hours

140,000

People on Facebook support the call for a general strike

French law faces fightback

WORKERS and students across France were set to strike and protest this Wednesday against a new employment law that would steamroller workplace rights.

It will help bosses make workers do longer hours—despite an unemployment rate of over 10 percent.

They wouldn't have to pay for this extra work for up to three

years. Many workers could work almost double the nominal 35-hour week.

The reform would also make it easier and cheaper to lay workers off.

More than a million people have signed a petition against the law.

And 140,000 have joined an event page on Facebook calling for a general strike.

Wednesday's protests were called by student organisations and are now backed by some unions.

Schools and colleges face occupations.

Strikes have been called including on the railways, Paris buses, Peugeot factories, parts of the public sector and Air France.

Fast food workers organise

LABOUR LEADER Jeremy Corbyn has backed fast food workers' struggle for "£10 an hour and a union".

He was speaking at a 200-strong Bfawu bakers' union fringe meeting at the Labour Youth conference in Scarborough earlier this month.

Corbyn stressed that current struggles are not just industrial, but about the kind of society we want to live in.

People are fed up of a society based on grotesque inequality, he said.

He said the Fast Food Rights campaign reminds him of our forefathers' "heroic struggle". Corbyn congratulated Hovis workers on their stand against zero-hours contracts. He said, "The rights we have... were never handed on a plate by the wealthy and the powerful".

Fast food workers from Glasgow, Scarborough, Hull and Oxford spoke of campaign successes.

Corbyn also called for internationalism in the trade union movement.

Bfawu president Ian Hodson renewed his call for a general strike.

He said, "To defend right to strike we need to use that right and strike."

"We want to bring this government down now, not wait until 2020."

On 14 April, Bfawu members will join fast food workers across the world in a day of action against low pay and zero hours contracts.

Kim Hunter
Scarborough

'Hell's kitchen - food workers take on bosses in Leicester', turn to pages 10 and 11

Royal Navy workers in Scotland right to strike

WE TOOK unofficial strike action against management attempts to transfer six workers without consulting the union on Thursday last week (Socialist Worker, 26 February).

This has been a long time coming.

There is a culture of bullying and intimidation.

Not to tar everyone with the same brush, so to speak, but the management at Rosyth with Balfour Beatty are terrible at



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Labour councils mustn't do the Tories' dirty work

TORY-RUN WESTMINSTER and Kensington & Chelsea councils are lobbying the government for more powers to move homeless people out of London.

Shamefully Labour councils, including Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest and Harrow are backing this lobbying.

The local authorities have written to the Commons communities and local government select committee to push for legal changes.

They want to make it easier to push homeless families out of their boroughs and to house people in the private rented sector.

These councils want to make it easier to do the government's dirty work, forcing families out of their

homes and communities, and stripping them of any remaining rights.

We know this social cleansing of our communities is already taking place, especially hitting young women, ethnic minorities and disabled people.

London councils report 1,653 placements outside the capital in 2014/15 compared to 637 in 2012/13.

There were 42,000 evictions last year, plus thousands more "no fault" evictions. This is taking place alongside soaring numbers of street homeless and crippling rents.

Millions of people are paying more than they can afford for an unsuitable, cramped and damp

home offering no long-term security.

We need to change the law and create the council homes people need, not drive out communities to make way for speculators. The fight against the Housing and Planning Bill is about exactly this.

Labour councillors need to be encouraged not to collaborate with the government's attacks on tenants, and instead join the fight to kill the Housing Bill and to secure homes for all.

Join the march for homes and against the Housing Bill on Sunday 13 March at 12 noon in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and demand your councillors come too.

Eileen Short
Defend Council Housing

Election crisis for Irish elite

WHAT A fitting way to celebrate the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising to see Ireland's establishment parties in crisis (Socialist Worker, 2 March).

The combined vote for Fianna Fail and Fine Gael barely reached 50 percent.

The left is now on a par with the Labour Party,



Brid Smith, one of the left wing TD's elected in last week's election

which paid the price for propping up austerity. We should congratulate our comrades in Ireland.

When I was growing up in Ireland we looked

abroad for inspiration. Today socialists across the world look to Ireland for that inspiration.

Paul Packham
Chesterfield

Just a thought...

I don't love EU, but...

REJECTING THE European Union (EU) isn't the same as leaving it.

Saying "I no longer love you (and I didn't much like you to start with)" is not the same as "I want a divorce."

There are still reasons to stay together. Think of the children...

Marjorie Caw
on Facebook

GIVEN THE options, I am not convinced that joining the Ukipers and Iain Duncan Smith to try and make a principled argument for leaving the EU will do us any good.

The EU has kept France and Germany from going to war for 70-plus years.

Andy Towle
On Facebook

Irish Labour gets punished

IRELAND'S LABOUR Party has rightly suffered for joining a coalition to bring in austerity.

This is what happens to right wing Labourites. Will the British Labour Party learn the lesson?

Those supporting Jeremy Corbyn need to hammer home the message.

Jeff Hurford
Cardiff

We need a revolution

TO LIVE in a world without war we have to bring down the system and build a mass movement against warmongering rulers and Imperialism.

@EpochEternal
on Twitter

WE NEED a revolution to galvanise people and to rid Britain of the Tories.

Patricia
on Twitter

THERE SHOULD be a general strike to get the Tory tossers out!

Sandra Noble
on Facebook

Trident is a dead end

THE SKILLS and jobs of workers employed on Trident would not be lost. Renewable jobs could be created.

The way forward is renewable energy, not missiles of destruction.

Brenda Poole
on Facebook

BAKERY WORKERS AREN'T FALLING FOR THE BOSSES' PORKIE PIES

Workers at the Samworth Brothers food factories in Leicestershire told Nick Clark why they'd had their fill of management taking all the dough

MILLIONAIRE David Samworth and the bosses at his Samworth Brothers' food factories probably thought they'd have no trouble pushing through attacks on workers.

David and his brother Mark, a Samworth Brothers' director, handed over half a million pounds between them to the Tories between 2010 and March last year.

Yet now they plead poverty to justify attacks on pay (see right).

Their mostly migrant workforce in Leicester and Melton Mowbray is spread across a number of different sites. And there has been no real union organisation there for years.

But workers aren't taking the attack lying down.

Hundreds of Samworth workers have flocked to join the Bfawu union in a matter of weeks. The spark was a letter from bosses threatening to cut shift premiums, overtime pay and paid breaks.

But as workers told Socialist Worker, that's not the only problem. Their names have been changed to protect them from victimisation.

"It's hard work," said Jaldev, who works at Samworth's Melton Mowbray site. "It's tiring. People working in lines, they do the same job again and again. Physical jobs—pulling, pushing, lifting."

Jaldev explained how most of the work takes place in extreme temperatures.

"It's cold. It's below five. But we have some hot places such as cookhouses where they're cooking the meat, sauces and stuff like that. The sauce comes out at nearly 90 degrees."

Chittesh, another worker, said, "We're handling hard frozen food and we only get plastic gloves. We've been asking for a long time for thermal gloves."

"They say it's not hygienic. But the government says that you can use

“There's only a half hour break from our lines. That's not even at a fixed time. People start working at six. If you have a break at 11 you're starving for five hours
Chittesh Samworth Brothers worker

thermal gloves in the food industry."

Daniel agreed that the work is hard. "Go and work there for a month," he challenged. "I'll give you £100 if you can survive one month. They treat you like shit."

Daniel worked at Samworth's Bradgate bakery in Leicester for 18 years before he retired. He said long hours was one of the toughest aspects of the job.

"Samworth Brothers used to push us to work after 12 hours," he said. "I've worked there 14 hours. They cannot say this is not true. The biggest bullshitters on this earth are Samworth Brothers."

Shift

Jaldev agreed. He explained that the shift system meant workers start work early in the morning, the afternoon or late at night. No one stops working until their order is complete.

"Sometimes you work 14 hours, sometimes you do 15 hours, sometimes we've done 16 hours," he said.

The long hours are made worse by the fact that workers don't always get proper breaks.

"We had to fight for our 100 breaks," said Chittesh. "And there's only a half hour break from our lines. That's not even at a fixed time. You get an eight o'clock break sometimes, and then you work until two o'clock. Sometimes you get an 11 o'clock break."

"They have to finish the order—10,000 sandwiches, 14,000 sandwiches. If the sandwiches are not finished you will not get a break at 11 o'clock."

"So people start working from six o'clock in the morning—obviously they wake up at about four or five. If you have a break at 11 o'clock you're starving for about five hours."

Work is done in crowded conditions at high speeds.

"It's not always safe to walk around," Daniel said. "When you are packed like sardines with 15, 16 lines running it's hard to carry your ingredients to the guy on the



Hundreds of workers attended a Bfawu union meeting last month

weighing machine."

Jaldev added, "Production is high. We're doing more than we used to. We used to do 20 lots of sauce in a night. We're doing 40 now."

"In 2007 we used to do 40 pies a minute. Now we're doing 70. I think accidents are high because production is high."

He added, "Recently someone broke his leg in two places. He burned himself. They put racks inside the ovens with meat to cook. An iron rack of about 100 kilos fell on his leg."

Workers also face ill health in retirement.

"So many are suffering from arthritis," said Daniel. "Many have a knee problem, or they're going for a knee operation because of the cold."

"All you have to do is go to Glenfield Hospital and find out how many Bradgate staff are there for

bad health." He added, "I'm suffering from rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, both of my knees are gone, I've got tennis elbow, my back is gone. Everything is gone because I bloody worked at Samworth."

"I have a hearing problem because it was one of the noisiest places I ever knew. They brought in earmuffs and made it mandatory to wear them. But there weren't enough for all the staff."

Workers complain of bullying and intimidation.

Daniel explained, "When accidents happen the question should be, did you see anything? Did you know how this happened?"

"Instead you feel you have to keep your mouth fucking shut—don't say anything. People get frightened."

Like in many workplaces, bosses at Samworth pretend to listen workers

“The union's picking up members. We've had people standing on gates campaigning. We've done mass meetings, and we've built up teams working inside
George Atwall Bfawu union official

through internal shop floor "reps". At Samworth these are called BCC reps.

But as Daniel explained, "Most are effectively chosen by the directors and the managers. They're all fucking company puppets."

Chittesh said one BCC rep spent six years trying to change things—but kept hitting a brick wall.

"That rep was elected and is fighting for people," he said. "But the BCCs cover up for management. And management hardly listen to them."

Daniel agreed. "When you take grievances from the line you have to go through the channel."

"You've got to go to a meeting with the managers. Anything against the company, they chop it off."

"Then they ask us, who are these people complaining? If you mention anyone's name they get hanged by their balls."

Bullying

Speaking up can land you in trouble. Chittesh said, "I call it bullying and harassment. If you speak out you are in their eyes a troublemaker and they try to push you out."

"Any little mistake, or not even a mistake, they'll give you warning letters, disciplinary."

All this means workers can be scared to join Bfawu. Chittesh said, "Some people have been called inside the office and threatened. Saying, if you're joining the union and if you're not listening to us, you're out of the door."

"But at the last two meetings people have been joining the union."

The recent attack on wages has pushed many workers into taking action. "About 120 people from one shift have signed a letter to say they don't like the proposal," said Jaldev.

"They have given three letters already to the management saying that

they don't like it. It says their living costs are going up so they can't afford to take it. I hear a lot of shifts signed it as a team and gave it to them. Now they want to meet us one by one to scare us."

Despite bosses' best attempts, hundreds of people have signed up to Bfawu in the past few weeks.

Mass

More than 300 people turned up when Bfawu called a mass meeting last month, surpassing organisers' expectations. Hundreds have attended more meetings since.

It shows the potential for resistance in workplaces where workers haven't previously been unionised.

Bfawu regional official George Atwall said, "The union's picking up a lot of membership."

"We've had people standing on gates campaigning. We've done mass meetings, and we've built up teams working inside now."

Bosses at Samworth are desperately trying to stop people joining the union. "One of the managers has been scaremongering," George said. "They said if the union gets in, Samworth Brothers will shut the door. We say to our members, be strong. There's probably four or five directors making these changes. But there's 5,000 of yourselves."

George explained how the attacks on pay and the drive to organise had the potential to turn things around for workers.

He said, "Samworth hasn't had a trade union for years. We've campaigned there in previous years. But what's happened there are totally unjustifiable changes."

"Now suddenly they're taking premium rates, shift allowance and as an insult offering them a business card and free car parking."

It won't be easy. But workers seem up for the fight. As Chittesh said, "It's been a lot of things over the years that have carried on like this."

"People are getting fed up."



Pie baron Sir David Samworth

Upper crust bosses are slicing up pay

WORKERS AT Samworth say they could lose as much as £3,000 if the bosses' new contracts go through.

Bank holiday and Sunday shift allowances would be scrapped. Night shift allowances and overtime would be gradually reduced, before getting rid of both.

In a job on minimum wage, where overtime is unavoidable, the losses will hit workers hard. Jaldev said, "People have got their houses and everything because of their wages. So bringing the new contracts will devastate us. A lot of families' livelihoods will be affected."

"If their wages go down, what are they going to do? They're going to struggle."

Samworth Brothers try to mask the cut behind pay increases and perks such as profit shares, discount cards and free parking.

They say the minimum wage increase to £7.20 in April—the Tories' new "Living Wage"—mean they can't afford to keep paying premiums.

They insist workers will be better off. But Daniel said, "They're using dirty tactics. They say look, we're giving you this, we're giving you that. But they're not actually telling you how much you're going to lose."

Workers have been told they could lose their jobs if they refuse to sign the new contract. But they're not going to take it—especially when they know business is good.

In 2014 Samworth Brothers made sales worth more than £800 million. Profits rose by 25 percent to £41.7 million.

Top boss David Samworth was listed by Leicester Mercury as Leicester's fifth richest man in 2015, worth £500 million.

Jaldev said, "They say the minimum wage is going up and they can't afford it. But Samworth is one of the biggest companies. They can afford it."

"Our hard work is putting Sir David Samworth where he is. We work hard on the shop floor to make a millionaire."

"We feel like we've been used and thrown in the bin."

“Samworth Brothers used to push us to work after 12 hours. I've worked there 14 hours. The biggest bullshitters on this earth are Samworth Brothers
Daniel Retired worker

“About 120 people from one shift have signed a letter to say they don't like the proposal. They have given three letters already to the management
Jaldev Samworth Brothers worker



Workers must make 70 pies each minute

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown.

Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

{ SOCIALIST WORKER }
PUBLIC MEETINGS

MANCHESTER

The EU referendum—the socialist case for a left exit

Thu 14 Apr, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
6 Mount St, M2 5NS

YORK

Marxism and women's liberation

Wed 16 Mar, 7.30pm,
Priory Street
Community Centre,
15 Priory St,
YO1 6ET

{ SOCIALIST WORKER }
BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

ABERDEEN

The EU referendum—the case for a left exit

Thu 17 Mar, 6pm,
The Snug, Ma Cameron's,
6-8 Little Belmont St,
AB10 1JG

BARNSELEY

Who's to blame for child abuse?

Thu 17 Mar, 6.30pm,
YMCA, Blucher St, S70 1AP

BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

Can Corbynomics work?

Wed 16 Mar, 7pm,
Birmingham LGBT Centre,
38/40 Holloway Circus,
B1 1EQ

BOLTON

Bernie Sanders—could there be a red in the White House?

Wed 16 Mar, 6.30pm,
Bolton Socialist Club,
16 Wood St (off
Bradshawgate), BL1 1DY

BRADFORD

Darwin's dangerous ideas

Wed 16 Mar, 7pm,
Glyde House, Little Horton
Lane (opposite the ice rink),
BD5 0BQ

BRIGHTON

Where next for Labour?

Wed 16 Mar, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Ship St, BN1 1AF

BRISTOL

The internationalist case for leaving the European Union

Wed 16 Mar, 7.30pm,
YHA, 14 Narrow Quay,
BS1 4QA

CAMBRIDGE

Education and neoliberalism

Thu 17 Mar, 7.30pm,
St Paul's, Hills Rd,
CB2 1JP

CARDIFF

The internationalist case for leaving the European Union

Wed 23 Mar, 7.30pm,
Cathays Community Centre,
Cathays Terrace, CF24 4HX

CHELMSFORD

Marxism and disability

Thu 17 Mar, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Rainford Rd, CM1 2QL

CHESTERFIELD

Is opposing Israel Antisemitic?

Thu 24 Mar, 7.30pm,
Chesterfield Library,
New Beetwell St, S40 1QN

COLCHESTER

James Connolly and the 1916 Easter Rising

Wed 16 Mar, 7.30pm,
The Odd One Out,
28 Mersea Rd, CO2 7ET

COVENTRY

The theory and practice of the united front

Wed 16 Mar, 7.30pm,
West Indian Centre,
159 Spon St, CV1 3BB

DERBY

Is Bernie Sanders the US's Jeremy Corbyn?

Thu 17 Mar, 7pm,
West End Community Centre,
Mackworth Rd (next
to Britannia Mill),
DE22 3BL

DONCASTER

What are the roots of racism?

Wed 16 Mar, 7.30pm,
Women's Centre,
21 Cleveland St, DN1 3EH

DUDLEY

Can Corbynomics work?

Wed 16 Mar, 8pm,
The What Centre,
23 Coventry St, DY8 1EP

DUNDEE

Do we have to wait for independence to get social change?

Wed 16 Mar, 7.30pm,
Dundee Voluntary Action,
10 Constitution Rd, DD1 1LL

EDINBURGH

Missile madness—why we say Trident must go

Wed 16 Mar, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
7 Victoria St, EH1 2JL

EXETER

Imperialism and the crisis in Syria

Thu 17 Mar, 7pm,
New Horizon Cafe,
47 Longbrook St, EX4 6AW

GLASGOW: NORTH

The internationalist case for leaving the European Union

Wed 16 Mar, 7.30pm,
Fred Paton Centre,
19 Carrington St (near
St George's Cross
underground), G4 9AJ

HARLOW

Fortress Europe—refugees, racism and the state

Thu 17 Mar, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
1 Church Leys, CM18 6BX

HUDDERSFIELD

How can we save our NHS?

Wed 16 Mar, 6.30pm,
Brian Jackson House,
2 New North Parade (near
both train and bus stations),
HD1 5JP

HULL

Can there be a revolution in Britain?

Thu 17 Mar, 7.30pm,
Grafton Hotel,
114-116 Grafton St,
HU5 2NP

LANCASTER

Missile Madness—why we say Trident must go

Thu 17 Mar, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Meeting House Lane, LA1 1TX

LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

How can we save our NHS?

Thu 17 Mar, 7pm,
The Swarthmore
Education Centre,
2-7 Woodhouse Square,
LS3 1AD

LIVERPOOL

Ireland: the Easter Rising 100 years on

Thu 24 Mar, 7.30pm,
The Caledonia,
22 Caledonia St, L7 7DX

LONDON: BRENT AND HARROW

What do we say about Corbynism?

Thu 17 Mar, 7.30pm,
The Pepperpot Centre,
1a Thorpe Close,
Ladbroke Grove (very close
to the station), W10 5XL

LONDON: BRIXTON

The Easter Rising 100 years on—Ireland's revolutionary tradition

Wed 23 Mar, 7pm,
Vida Walsh Centre,
2b Saltoun Rd (near Effra Rd,
facing Windrush Square),
SW2 1EP

LONDON: CAMDEN

The internationalist case for leaving the European Union

Thu 17 Mar, 7pm,
Chadwick Building - G07,
University College London,
Gower St, WC1E 6BT

LONDON: EALING

Alienation—tell me why I don't like Mondays

Thu 17 Mar, 7.30pm,
West London Trade Union Club,
33-35 High St,
Acton, W3 6ND

MOVEMENT EVENTS

STAND UP TO RACISM
REFUGEES WELCOME

Build mass protests on

Saturday 19 March

in London, Glasgow and Cardiff

Protests called by Stand Up to Racism (SUTR).

LONDON

Sat 19 Mar, 12 noon,
Trafalgar Square,
SW1Y 5AY

GLASGOW

Sat 19 Mar, 12 noon,
George Square,
G2 1DU

CARDIFF

Sat 19 Mar, 11.30am,
Clare Gardens, CF11

● **Coaches to London are going from across Britain.**
● **For more information and local coach details go to standuptoracism.org.uk**

Rallies and public meetings to build the demonstrations

BIRMINGHAM

Wed 9 Mar, 7pm,
Carrs Lane Church Centre,
Carrs Lane, B4 7SX.
With: Talha Ahmed (Muslim
Association of Britain),
Roger McKenzie (Unison),
Natalie Bennett

LONDON: HACKNEY

What do Marxists say about terrorism?

Thu 17 Mar, 7.30pm,
The Round Chapel,
2 Powerscroft Rd (corner
Lower Clapton Rd), E5 0PU

LONDON: HARINGEY

Marxism and women's liberation

Wed 16 Mar, 7.30pm,
St John Vianney Church Hall,
386 West Green Rd (corner
Vincent Rd), N15 3QL

LONDON: ISLINGTON

Fortress Europe: refugees, racism and the state

Thu 17 Mar, 7pm,
The Old Fire Station,
84 Mayton St, N7 6QT

LONDON: KINGSTON

What are the roots of racism?

Thu 17 Mar, 7pm,
Kingston Quaker Centre,
Fairfield East, KT1 2PT

LONDON: LEWISHAM

Why we need a revolutionary party

Wed 16 Mar, 7.30pm,
West Greenwich Community
and Arts Centre,
141 Greenwich High Rd
(near Greenwich main
line and DLR station),
SE10 8JA

LONDON: NEWHAM

Imperialism and the crisis in Syria

Wed 16 Mar, 7pm,
Stratford Advice Arcade,
107-109 The Grove (next to
Morrisons car park), E15 1HP

LONDON: SOUTHWARK

The internationalist case for leaving the European Union

Thu 17 Mar, 7pm,
Camberwell Leisure
Centre (Room 2),
Artichoke Place, SE5 8TS



BURNLEY

Wed 9 Mar, 7.30pm,
Lesser Municipal Hall,
Albert Rd, BB8 0AQ.
With: Janet Alder,
Clir Azhar Ali, Fran Sullivan
(Unite), Graham Sawyer
(St James church),
Nahella Ashraf (SUTR)

CHESTERFIELD

Tue 15 Mar, 7.30pm,
Saints Centre,
Saint Mary's Gate, S41 7TD

COVENTRY

Wed 16 Mar, 7.30pm,
Urban Coffee,
Unit 7 Fargo Village,
Far Gosford St, CV1 5ED.
With: Councillor Abdul Salam
Khan, Sabir Zazai (Coventry
Refugee and Migrant Centre),
Zak Cochrane (SUTR),
Syrian Refugee

LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

Are we heading for another economic slump?

Wed 16 Mar, 7pm,
Oxford House, Derbyshire St
(opposite Bethnal Green Rd
Tesco), E2 6HG

LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

Fighting oppression and exploitation—Marxism and women's liberation

Wed 16 Mar, 7.30pm,
Quaker Meeting House,
1a Jewel Rd (off Hoe St),
E17 4QU

MANCHESTER: CHORLTON

Bernie Sanders—could there be a red in the White House?

Wed 16 Mar, 7pm,
Chorlton Central Church
(Meeting Room),
Barlow Moor Rd,
M21 8BF

MANCHESTER: CITY CENTRE

Trident—what do socialists say?

Thu 17 Mar, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
6 Mount St, M2 5NS

MANCHESTER: LONGSIGHT

AND LEVENSHULME

Are we heading for another economic slump?

Thu 17 Mar, 7.30pm,
Inspire, 747 Stockport Rd,
M19 3AR

MEDWAY

Is Bernie Sanders the US's Jeremy Corbyn?

Thu 17 Mar, 7.30pm,
Nucleus Arts Centre
(Conference Room),
272 High St, ME4 4BP

NEWCASTLE

Revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx

Thu 17 Mar, 7pm,
Broadacre House,
Market St,
NE1 6HQ

LONDON: CENTRAL

Wed 9 Mar, 6.30pm,
UCL LG04, 26 Bedford Way,
WC1H 0AP.

With: Ian Lawrence (Napo),
Sally Hunt (UCU)

LONDON: NORTH-WEST

Wed 9 Mar, 7.30pm,
Paddington Arts,
32 Woodfield Rd,
W9 2BE.

With: Humera Khan (An-Nisa
Muslim womens' group),
Ian Hodson (Bfawu),
Christine Blower (NUT)

LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

Mon 14 Mar, 7pm,
Human Rights Action Centre,
17-25 New Inn Yard,
EC2A 3EA
With: Muzna from Syria,
Michelline Safi Ngongo,
Weyman Bennett (SUTR)



PORSTMOUTH

Mon 14 Mar, 7pm,
Central Library,
Guildhall Square, PO1 2DX

SWANSEA

Thu 17 Mar, 7.30pm,
The Iceland Building,
27-29 High St, SA1 1LG

YORK

Fri 11 Mar, 7.30pm,
Crescent Community Venue,
8 The Crescent, YO24 1AW.
With: Rachael Maskell MP,
Tahah (Syrian refugee)

SHEFFIELD: CITY CENTRE

Are we heading for another economic slump?

Thu 17 Mar, 7pm,
Central United
Reformed Church,
60 Norfolk St (near Crucible
Theatre), S1 2JB

SOUTHAMPTON

Can Corbynomics work?

Wed 16 Mar, 7.30pm,
Central Baptist Church Hall,
Devonshire Rd,
SO15 2GY

STALBANS

The EU referendum—the socialist case for a left exit

Wed 20 Apr, 7.30pm,
Trinity Church Hall (upstairs),
1 Beaconsfield Rd (near
St Albans City station),
AL1 3RD

SWANSEA

Human nature—are we too selfish for socialism?

Thu 24 Mar, 7.30pm,
Brynmill Community Centre,
St Albans Rd,
SA2 0BP

WOLVERHAMPTON

AND WALSALL

The EU referendum—the socialist case for a left exit

Wed 16 Mar, 7.30pm,
Wild Bytes Cafe,
Darlington St,
WV1 4HW

CONTACT
THE SWP

Phone 020 7840 5600

Email

Hail Caesar! A trifle nostalgic—but who doesn’t like that?

The Coen brothers flirt with an era when Hollywood harboured the US’s biggest threats—Communism and homosexuality, writes **Simon Basketter**

JOEL AND Ethan Coen’s Hail Caesar! is a playful romp through Hollywood’s “golden age”—a deliberately vague time and idea in the film.

Egos and cigars are huge and studio backlots are filled with armies of extras and half built Roman cities. It delights in a loving pastiche of genres—from westerns to Busby Berkeley-style synchronised swimming. The movie flaunts its let’s-put-on-a-show scrappiness, as the Coens display the work required to produce a film.

Beneath glitzy nostalgia, the film flirts with a time when Hollywood incubated two supposed threats to the US’s perceived domestic bliss—Communism and homosexuality.

There are plenty of movies about movies, but here Cold War tragedy is a remake of a farce.

A “study group” of radical writers, dubbing themselves “The Future,” argue bad Marxism. They drug and kidnap Hollywood star Baird Whitlock (George Clooney).

History

They are led by actor Burt Gurney (Channing Tatum) who arrives in a fabulous On the Town/Anchors Aweigh-style musical number No Dames.

The Coen brothers churn up the history and untruth in the sideshow that is the plot—but no matter.

This film is about the sheen of the screen and the sleazy, greedy, compromised mess behind the scenes.

Identical journalists circle for scandal. A bumbling actor delivers a populist religious aside written by a Communist. A singing cowboy will eventually come to his rescue.

The Coens’ films often place

together work by artists and film makers who look at past and present political struggles, social movements and revolutions.

One of the highlights this year will be a screening of the 1974 documentary Nightcleaners.

Based on a campaign to unionise women cleaners, it will be shown on International Women’s Day.

The festival itself is based around George

Orwell’s novel The Road to Wigan Pier.

The first half chronicled working class people’s lives in the North of England during the height of the 1930s Depression.

In the second half Orwell polemicised about the need for socialism.

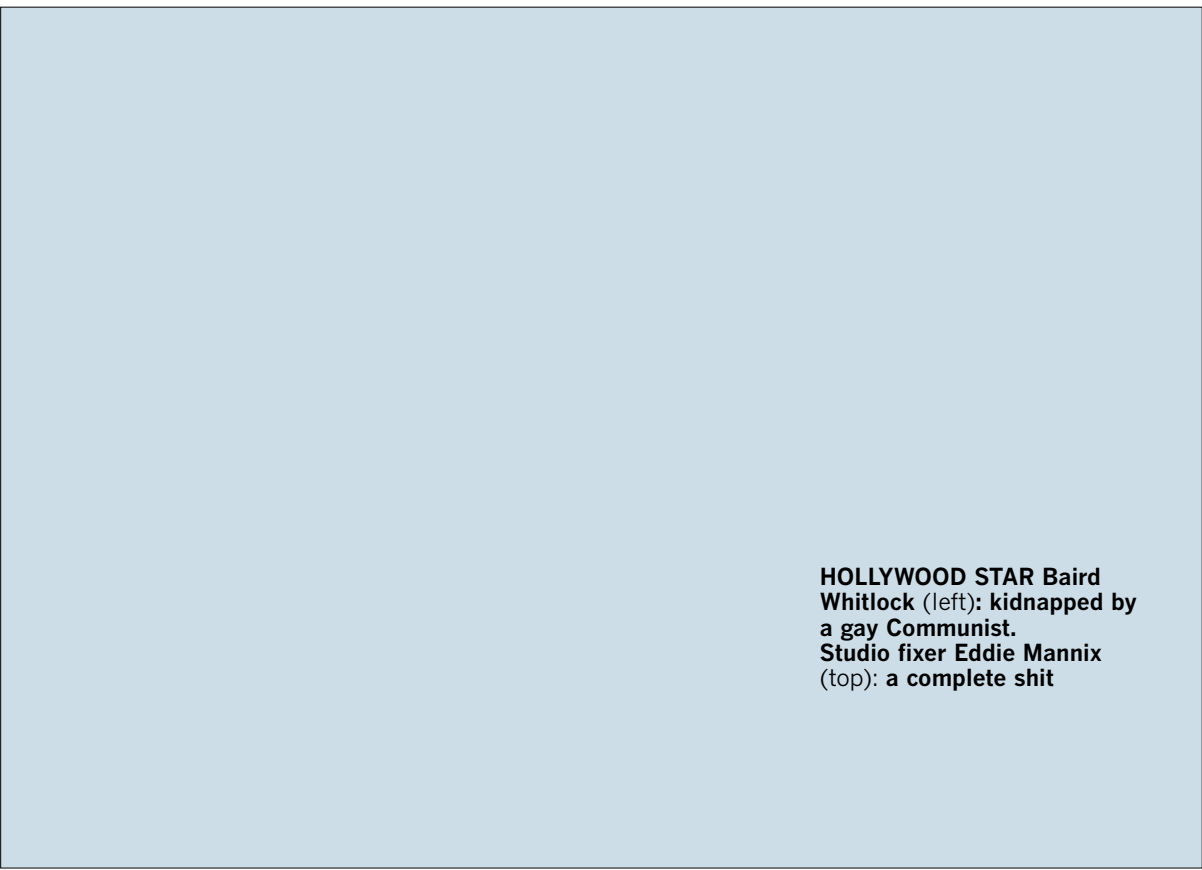
There will also be Left Book Club discussions of Orwell’s work throughout the festival.

AV mirrors the structure of the book.

It will return to the north east in 2018.

THIS YEAR’S AV Festival focuses on socialism—the most looked-up word in 2015.

AV is a biannual festival of music, film and visual art. It brings



HOLLYWOOD STAR Baird Whitlock (left): kidnapped by a gay Communist. Studio fixer Eddie Mannix (top): a complete shit

someone struggling to do the right thing in a maddening world. Here our hero is Capitol Picture studio fixer Eddie Mannix (Josh Brolin). In real life—and a little bit in the film—he was a complete shit.

He confesses his private sins to his local Catholic priest, but his public crimes are more unconscionable.

The film plays and plays again—for the hell of it—with Hollywood tropes.

The mashed up movie references

are more about giving general sense of place than trainspotting.

Kapital

The scandals covered up are real Hollywood legends. And the showy cinematography is better than just recreation.

It is Capitol Pictures versus Kapital—“with a K”, as Clooney puts it.

Their dreams are crushed, propped up and made glorious. Hail, Caesar!

is a trifle nostalgic, but who isn’t nostalgic for trifle?

And can any Socialist Worker reader really not want to see a film where a gay Communist kidnaps George Clooney and then gives up a fortune to save a dog called Engels?

Hail, Ceasar!

Directed and written by Joel and Ethan Coen

Universal Pictures

Out now

Socialism upon Tyne—opening up a radical tradition

FESTIVAL

AV FESTIVAL—MEANWHILE, WHAT ABOUT SOCIALISM...

Various locations in Newcastle, Gateshead, Jarrow and Seaton Sluice

Until 27 March 2016

Tickets

avfestival.co.uk

THIS YEAR’S AV Festival focuses on socialism—the most looked-up word in 2015.

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It will return to the north east in 2018.



Nightcleaners (1974)

BOOK

IRELAND’S GUANTANAMO GRANNY

Margaretta D’Arcy

Women’s Pirate Presss

£12.00

Out now

IRELAND’S Guantanamo Granny is the new book by Galway-based activist and writer Margaretta D’Arcy.

As well as personal stories, the book also details Margaretta’s fight against the use of Shannon Airport by the US military.

D’Arcy has been in prison twice for protesting at the airport.

“For me writing this book gave me the opportunity to reassess my experience,” she said.

“I think it is one of those



Writer Margaretta D’Arcy

things that you experience and that if you don’t put it down on paper quickly, it’s gone

“The book explains where I’m coming from. It’s just not one day I suddenly woke up and thought, ‘Oh my God, I have to go on the runway at Shannon’.”

TOP 5 BOOKS	
Bestsellers at Bookmarks, the socialist Bookshop	
1	The EU—a left case for exit Joseph Choonara
2	Trash Trident: The Socialist Case Against Missile Madness Socialist Worker
3	A Very Capitalist Condition—a history and politics of disability Roddy Slorach
4	One Million Climate Jobs—tackling the environmental and economic crises Jonathan Neale
5	1916—Ireland’s Revolutionary Tradition Kieran Allen

Phone 020 7637 1848
bookmarksbookshop.co.uk
Why not visit the shop at 1 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3QE

FIVE years since Syrians took to the streets in their thousands against the dictator Bashar al-Assad, the country has been torn apart by war.

This is a far cry from when the Syrian revolution began in 2011.

The revolution was a genuine popular revolt and part of the revolutionary wave that swept the Middle East and North Africa in 2011.

In Syria discontent was already bubbling to the surface and many ordinary Syrians took inspiration from the Arab Spring.

When a small group tried to hold a solidarity vigil with Egyptian demonstrators, they were quickly beaten up by regime thugs. In Deraa cops arrested 15 school students for spray painting, “The people want to topple the regime.”

Their torture by Assad’s secret police helped spark protests across the country.

Hundreds marched in the capital Damascus on 15 March demanding political reforms. Assad’s troops opened fire and he tried to blame the unrest on “foreign conspirators”.

The protests rapidly spread and people’s demands moved from political reforms to toppling the regime.

As Assad’s forces retreated across the country popular committees were created to run basic public services. Ordinary people as well as activists took part in these initiatives.

But the devastation caused by the regime’s bombing forced the retreat of the mass movement as the struggle became increasingly militarised.

The West was desperate to regain the initiative as the Arab Spring had weakened imperialism in the Middle East.

The US backed the Syrian National Council and the Syrian National Initiative. But these were formed of politicians who had little connection with the people on the ground.

Unlike in Tunisia and Egypt, the organised working class did not play a key role in the popular revolution.

Workers in Syria had not been able to gain experience in organising themselves through mass strikes before 2011.

Organising

There was a “general strike” as late as December 2011. But it came out of a call for civil disobedience by the opposition, not workers organising themselves.

In response to the popular revolution Assad launched a brutal crackdown and a sectarian civil war. In this context groups with the largest arsenal could gain influence.

Defecting officers and troops had broken away and formed the Free Syrian Army (FSA). At first they did the bulk of the fighting. But different Islamist groups with better access to

funding began to gain influence.

In order to focus on crushing the popular opposition, the regime abandoned the north-east of the country. Coming from neighbouring Iraq, ISIS was able to establish a base in this region.

World and regional powers—from the US to Russia and Iran—jockeyed to bolster their influence by supporting rival factions in the civil war.

The West tried to intervene in August 2013. Only an



World powers jockeyed for influence by supporting rival factions

The revolt descended into civil war

Syrians protest after Friday prayers in Damascus, 2011

REVOLT AND WAR IN SYRIA

Five years ago Syrians rose up against the regime. Socialist Worker explains how the revolution’s defeat led to horror, and Razan Ghazzawi looks back at its hopeful beginnings

Razan Ghazzawi was in Damascus at the start of the revolution. Now in Britain, she told Anne Alexander what happened

“THERE WAS a sense of inspiration from the fall of Ben Ali in Tunisia and Mubarak in Egypt in 2011,” said Razan.

“At the beginning of the year there were some small-scale protests organised by bloggers. But the sign that something had really changed came with a protest at the Al-Hamidiyya souk in February after police beat a shopkeeper.

“It was the first of its kind, a completely spontaneous protest by local people in a high profile area of central Damascus. The main demand in the Souk was, the Syrian people will not be humiliated. “There were no other clear demands at the time, people were wondering what to do, experimenting with the movement. The movement was still ‘finding itself’.

“People started having political discussions, away from public spaces for fear of informers. Often activists met in homes, in small circles where personal relationships were the basis of trust.

“The people who were cultural, writers, journalists, intellectuals—the upper middle-class opponents of the regime—had access to all kinds of tools like the internet.

“Working class people didn’t have the same access but were central to the movement.”

Transformed

The spark which transformed these small scale gatherings into a mass revolt came from Deraa, a town on Syria’s southern border.

Demonstrations erupted after a group of school students were arrested for writing “the people want the downfall of the regime” on a wall.

Razan said, “They were tortured. Then the army shot and killed their protesting families. It shook Syrian society.

“Solidarity protests erupted in other parts of the Deraa region and soon spread to other regions.”

At first hundreds protested, then thousands. There were protests in other cities.

“Repression only hardened the protesters’ resolve,” said Razan, “and they kept on protesting in spite of live ammunition being used by the armed forces against them.

Russia intervened to bolster its ally Assad last year. After the Paris terror attacks in November last year Western powers, including Britain, joined the imperial carve up under the guise of “fighting Isis”.

The combination of counter revolution in Syria and imperialist intervention is what’s responsible for the horror.

READ MORE

● Isis, imperialism and the war in Syria

by Anne Alexander in International Socialism
bit.ly/1OLgFOE

● Syria: from inter-imperialist rivalry to inter-imperial clash

by Simon Assaf in Socialist Review
bit.ly/1TvSjPZ

● Arguments for Revolution

by Joseph Choonara and Charlie kimber
£3.00

Available at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to bookmarksbookshop.co.uk



in a very narrow reality, where we did not know that other possible realities exist. Despite this, we discovered ourselves in this uprising.”

The regime worked hard to make sectarian differences into a frontline of the battle, as a way to fracture the unity of the mass movement.

“But it is not like people started to kill each other because they hate each other. What happened is that people started to protest peacefully.

Tortured

“Then the army and the security forces came and shot them and they kept shooting them and they kept bombing them, using chemical weapons and they tortured them to death.

“This violence made the Syrians in late 2012 and early 2013 carry weapons to defend themselves.

“I was there in a protest, a peaceful protest surrounded by the Free Syrian Army (FSA) who did not shoot a bullet.

“They were just there to scare the regime from shooting us. The FSA were mainly soldiers defecting from the regime to help the Syrian protesters to protest.

“Despite all the suffering we should also remember how people have changed. A lot of men who did not believe in women’s work, in women’s participation, today they have changed altogether.

“We should also remember when people say that there is a civil war in Syria that more than seven countries have bombed Syria in the last five years.

“I call that a war on Syria.”

A PROTEST in 2012. The banner reads, “Through the Syrian revolution, we are reborn everyday.”

Younger people knew of the regime’s reputation for brutality, and an older generation had experienced the crushing of protests in the 1980s. But they were unprepared for the scale of repression in 2011.

The story of the revolt led by Islamists in Hama in 1982 which ended in a siege of the city and the slaughter of up to 20,000 people by the Syrian Army had been written out of history.

“The regime was notoriously repressive and violent, but did well to hide its violence,” said Razan. “People generally were very scared and didn’t dare mention the Hama massacre.

“For millions of Syrians, who had heard of the censorship and the torture, now was the first time they witnessed repression first hand, out in the open, and experienced it collectively.

“Bashar was branded as a kind of liberal reformer because of his education in Britain. But we witnessed that Bashar was just like his father, and was committing even worse atrocities.

Overcome

“The collective nature of the protests gave a space where you could see a way to overcome divisions. In this uprising, we started to have a dialogue.

“One thing that I have learned in this uprising is that the regime knows us better than we know ourselves because it has all the data, it has all the maps, it has everything.

“It’s amazing how we existed



FOCUS ON OPPRESSION

Does breaking the glass ceiling liberate women?

Sadie Robinson looks at what difference electing a woman president would have in the fight against sexism

THE RACE for the US presidency has raised the prospect of a woman becoming leader of the world’s most powerful country for the first time.

Hillary Clinton is fighting to be the Democratic Party candidate in the presidential election. Some argue that a Clinton victory would mark a step forward for women’s rights.

It would certainly be a milestone to have a female US president. But it wouldn’t guarantee improvements for ordinary women.

The relative lack of women in governments reflects the oppression that exists in society.

A “glass ceiling” means that the higher up society you go, the fewer women you find.

Struggles by ordinary people have challenged the idea that women should know their place in society. It has forced open spaces that were previously closed.

Positions

But the system can accommodate a few women in high-up positions while oppression keeps the rest down. And ultimately their politics and class matter more than their gender.

Britain’s first female prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, brought in policies that made working class women’s lives worse.

German chancellor Angela Merkel is a key figure in forcing more austerity on Greece, hitting ordinary women.

Hillary Clinton is an establishment candidate who relies on huge corporate backing to finance her campaign.

She supported the 2003 invasion of Iraq and backs welfare cuts. Clinton would not fight to improve the lives of ordinary women if elected. It would be a far bigger

HILLARY CLINTON on the campaign trail

political earthquake if Bernie Sanders, who calls himself a socialist, became US president.

Clinton has attacked Sanders for focusing on inequality and poverty.

She argues that it’s “not enough” to “break up the banks”.

And she claims making class demands ignores oppression.

In a speech last month she said poverty among black people was not just about “economic inequality” but also “racial equality”.

Of course this is true. But the aim of Clinton’s argument is to weaken Sanders’ class demands in the guise of raising demands about oppression.

Sanders’ policies include increasing benefits, a \$15 (£10.60) an hour minimum wage, free tuition for students and fewer people in jail.

These things would make a much bigger difference to the lives of ordinary black people and women in the US than anything Clinton is proposing. Similar arguments have been heard in Britain. In the

Labour leadership contest last year, Yvette Cooper campaigned heavily on the basis that she was a “working mum”.

She presented herself as a defender of women’s rights and claimed she was better placed to understand the problems women face.

But it was far better for working class women that Jeremy Corbyn, not Yvette Cooper, won the election.

Refused

Cooper supported the Tories’ benefit cap and attacks on claimants. She refused to stand up to cuts that disproportionately affect women. In contrast Corbyn has spoken out against austerity.

The major advances in women’s lives—from the right to vote to abortion rights—have been won through struggle.

This doesn’t make elections irrelevant.

The election of Barack Obama as the first black US president in 2008 made black people feel more confident to make demands on the system.

Corbyn’s election has politicised more people and made those who hate war, racism and neoliberalism feel stronger.

Revolutionaries should use this mood to build struggles that can win real changes and counter the impact of oppression in the here and now.

And we need to build resistance that can build a world where we make oppression history.



The system can accommodate a few women in high-up positions

Welcome in the Valleys for Corbyn

by TOMÁŠ TENGEY-EVANS in Aberdare

OVER 1,000 Labour members and supporters heard Jeremy Corbyn speak in Aberdare, South Wales, last Saturday. It was the biggest political meeting in the Valleys for decades, and a real tonic.

It showed the strength of support by ordinary Labour members for Corbyn's leadership. Julia said, "There's some people that are still too Blairite, but the grassroots of the Labour Party support him."

The meeting was organised by Cynon Valley Labour Party for the annual Keir Hardie lecture to commemorate one of Labour's founders.

Corbyn told the meeting, "Our party would not have achieved what it's done in the last century without Keir Hardie's clarity and vision. But many of our members and supporters feel that Labour lost its way."

Many people said they felt the party had been won back from the right. Nigel said, "Jeremy is the first person to speak sense in years. Labour in the general election was a sham—Ed Miliband was Tory-lite."

Gareth, the Unison union Cardiff and Vale health branch chair, said, "The Blairites are just doing damage to the Labour Party. They should be rallying behind the leadership."



CORBYN WAS a big hit in Aberdare

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

"Corbyn has doubled the membership—of course he can win."

Under Tony Blair's leadership, Welsh Labour played up its left wing credentials. But now Welsh first minister Carwyn Jones has distanced himself from Corbyn.

Many at the Aberdare meeting weren't sure why Jones did this and said it could be "damaging".

To thunderous applause Corbyn told the meeting, "A proud son of this area, the general secretary of the PCS union Mark Serwotka, has joined the Labour Party. He is very welcome."

He added, "We're going to fight the Trade Union Bill in the House of Commons. When we're elected, we'll repeal it."

Not everyone was convinced. Martin said, "I joined Labour when I was 16 and was very active, but left when Blair got rid of Clause 4 [the commitment to public ownership]."

"I'm thinking about rejoining, but I'm not sure if it's going to work."

"I don't trust Labour—it is so full of corrupt people who won't let this happen."

Corbyn's left wing tone in Aberdare was different to his speech a few days earlier to the British Chambers of Commerce. There he called for "cooperation—between public and private, state and market, government and entrepreneurs and workforce and employers."

Under the headline "Corbyn talks business with corporate chiefs" the Financial Times newspaper's chief political correspondent wrote that "anyone expecting the bearded socialist to explain his strategy for the 'overthrow of capitalism'—once advocated by John McDonnell, his right-hand man—would have been disappointed."

"One observer said, 'You could have put most of that stuff into a George Osborne speech without frightening the horses'."

Corbyn told his audience of sceptical businessmen, "You may not like everything we say, but on skills, infrastructure, and investment, we are natural allies."

Corbyn's policies will not be defended by compromises with the right, appeals to Labour unity, or internal manoeuvres.

It's in fighting—not waiting for a Labour victory—where the strength of both Corbyn and the Labour movement lies.

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Fight to save key service that saves women's lives

Campaigners talk to **Sadie Robinson** about a battle against the closure of Doncaster Women's Aid, which supports victims of domestic violence

CAMPAIGNERS IN Doncaster have warned against council plans to cancel funding for the Women's Aid domestic abuse support service. Women will die as a result.

The Labour-run council cut funding for the service three years ago. Since then it's been forced to rely on money from the Big Lottery.

But because the lottery funding is linked to council funding, this has now been withdrawn. If Doncaster Women's Aid closes there will be no Women's Aid anywhere in South Yorkshire.

Angry campaigners are fighting to defend the service. As one survivor, Emma, told Socialist Worker, "If it wasn't for Doncaster Women's Aid, I probably wouldn't be here today."

Tories

Local campaigner Diane told Socialist Worker, "We've been told that the doors to Doncaster Women's Aid will close on 31 March. It's been in the town for 40 years.

"Since 2010 when the Tories got in, some 54 percent of domestic violence services have gone. So the cuts are no surprise. But if the service goes, women will die."

Emma said the service was crucial in helping her escape. "When you're in a violent relationship, it's terrifying," she said. "You get suffocated.

"Doncaster Women's Aid helped educate me about my rights and what abuse is."

Campaigners have held street protests and demonstrations to defend Women's Aid. They've launched an online petition, contacted MPs and



CAMPAIGNERS demonstrate against council cuts to Doncaster Women's Aid

PICTURES: NEIL TERRY

councillors, and approached unions and campaign groups for support.

The campaign has been organised by Women's Lives Matter and backed by other groups including Sisters Uncut.

Labour

Councillors have blamed the Tories for imposing funding cuts, implying that their hands are tied.

Diane said, "Some councillors are upset because they say we're demonstrating the council.

"Labour MPs have gone

crackers. Of course the Tories are the enemy.

"But we want our political representatives to act for us. If they want our votes, they have to look after the most vulnerable."

Women need services such as Women's Aid as they are often failed by the authorities.

"I got called a drama queen by one police officer," said Emma. "One said to me, 'You type of women like a bit of attention, don't you?'"

Eventually she built up the courage

to call Women's Aid. "I remember the first thing they said to me was, 'I believe you'. It gave me courage straight away.

"My fear is that women in the future will have nowhere to go. They will either live with long term abuse, be killed by their abuser or kill themselves. We have got to save this service."

Names have been changed. For further details and to join the campaign contact womenslivesmatter@gmail.com and sign the petition in support of Women's Aid at chn.ge/1nEmWo

Council cuts hurt vulnerable

DONCASTER has some of the highest rates of domestic violence in Britain.

There's been a 75 percent rise in child abuse rates in Doncaster.

In 2012 some 12 phone calls a day were made to police about domestic violence in Doncaster.

And a woman suffers on average 35 incidents of abuse before she calls police.

Meanwhile the council last week approved plans put forward by mayor Ros Jones to slash spending by £31 million in the 12 months from April.

The cuts will squeeze services to support women even more.

Police don't help victims

SOUTH Yorkshire Police (SYP) are letting domestic violence victims down.

That's according to an official report by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary.

The report found in December last year that, "The force's response to domestic violence is not consistently good and requires improvement."

SYP said it had made improvements in its response.

It boasted that officers now follow basic procedures such as making "a record of observations relating to children at a domestic abuse incident".

Domestic abuse is systemic

TWO women are killed every week in England and Wales by a current or ex partner.

A quarter of women in England and Wales will suffer domestic violence at some point during their lives.

Police in Britain receive a domestic assistance call every minute—despite the fact that most incidents aren't reported to the police.

Some 25 percent of children in Britain have witnessed domestic abuse.

Domestic violence worker speaks out against cuts

A DOMESTIC violence worker in Doncaster told Socialist Worker about the scale of the problem in the town.

"We see thousands of women," she said. "We're just inundated. Since January I have seen some horrific cases. It's been non-stop, high risk cases.

"Many women had gone to social services or the police, but they've needed our service to protect them. Domestic abuse isn't taken seriously by society.

"Domestic violence

specialists regularly work with women who are suicidal or have attempted suicide.

"Nine women a week attempt suicide because of domestic abuse and three die.

"And with each horrific cut to mental health services and refuges, these women have less support to keep them alive.

"Our service changes people's lives. It's a lifeline.

"A lot of the abusive behaviour is normalised in society, so women often



Defending services for women

don't realise they've been in an abusive relationship.

"The power they have from coming to us, not being judged, is massive.

They get strength. They get advice, support, therapeutic help and their children get support too.

"Women are often scared to report domestic violence as they worry their children will be taken away. We need voluntary sector women's aid to give them support.

"It's important that it's free. Poverty, cuts and austerity are absolutely hindering any woman's chance of escaping domestic abuse.

"Women in poverty are more likely

to be in abusive relationships because it's harder to escape.

"Of the £26 billion benefit cuts since 2010, some £22 billion has come from working class women. Women are being sanctioned if they can't turn up to appointments because they're dealing with abuse or the fallout from abuse.

"Services women need as an outlet to get out of the house, or to get a job to escape, are being cut. Every avenue is being cut."

IN BRIEF

Asylum action in Huddersfield

SOCIALISTS, activists and asylum seekers in Huddersfield staged a protest vigil against the Tories' Immigration Bill on Thursday of last week.

The bill threatens to snatch housing, money and health care from rejected asylum seekers and their families.

The vigil, organised by Destitute Asylum Seekers Huddersfield, got a sympathetic response.

Martin Jones

Keep Dearne Valley free from fracking

FRACK FREE Dearne Valley's first public meeting in Wath on Friday of last week attracted nearly 50 people including many ex-miners.

There was anger that fracking licences have been granted for the whole of the Barnsley and Dearne Valley.

People plan to spread the campaign to other villages.

Bristol debates the EU referendum

SOME 65 people met in Bristol on Thursday of last week to debate the left and the EU referendum.

Labour MP Thangam Debbonaire and Green Party councillor Anna McMullen argued for a Yes vote.

Greek socialist Terry Karampini and Joseph Choonara from the Socialist Workers Party said the left should vote No.

Huw Williams

UCU Left wins seats in election

UCU LEFT supporters Sean Vernell, Julia Roberts, Sean Wallis, Rachel Cohen, Margot Hill, Dawn Livingston, Elaine White, Sue Abbott and Julie Hearn have been elected to the union's national executive committee.

Mandy Brown, UCU Left candidate for vice president, won nearly 40 percent of the vote.

Health workers vote for strikes

HEALTH WORKERS in south London fighting outsourcing giant Aramark for £10 an hour have voted by 97 percent to strike.

The GMB union members work in South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust's Maudsley, Lambeth, Bethlem and Ladywell hospitals.

Over 100 come to SWP dayschool

SOME 130 people took part in a Socialist Workers Party dayschool for new members last Saturday.

It saw enthusiastic debates about Jeremy Corbyn, the EU referendum, imperialism, the battle against oppression and much more.

WORKERS' RIGHTS



TRADE UNIONISTS on the march in Cardiff last Saturday

PICTURES: SOCIALIST WORKER

Protest in Cardiff says no to Trade Union Bill

by TOMÁŠ TENGYEVANS

AROUND 500 people protested against the Tories' Trade Union Bill in Cardiff last Saturday.

The Trade Union Pride march came after the Welsh Assembly condemned the bill as "draconian" and "unnecessary" last month.

Peter Crews, Unison union regional convenor, told Socialist Worker, "If this bill goes through it will lead to confrontations, whether that's legal or illegal."

"But it's no good just calling for confrontations, we've got to be prepared now."

Protesters marched through Cardiff and rallied outside the National Museum, where PCS union members are battling attacks on pay for unsocial hours pay.

The crowd cheered loudly when Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn pledged that a Labour government would repeal



Backing Corbyn on demo

the bill.

Labour AM Mick Antoniw said, "If the Tories implement the Trade Union Bill in Wales we'll bring in emergency legislation to disapply it in

Wales." That's an important commitment.

But Welsh Labour's main concern is that the bill would disrupt "social partnership" with the union leaders.

Hannah, a National Museum PCS rep, questioned the reality of "social partnership" in their dispute.

She said, "It's difficult to see how that's being implemented."

Union leaders use talk of partnership to avoid confrontation with the Welsh government and argue it will protect workers from Tory attacks.

In reality strikes, not the assembly, will defend workers.

As Keith Harris, a health worker in Unison, said, "We've got to keep protesting. And if they come for someone, we've got to stand together."

For details of action over the Trade Union Bill go to uniteresist.org

WELFARE CAMPAIGNS

Demonstrators block roads against Tory benefit attack

AROUND 100 people protested in Islington, north London, on Friday of last week against a trial plan to put "job coaches" in GPs surgeries.

These advisors will be funded by job centres but employed by Remploy.

Remploy is now a subsidiary of Maximus, the firm carrying out the government's hated "fit for work" tests on sick and disabled benefit claimants.

The protest was called by groups including Disabled People Against Cuts (Dpac).

Protesters gathered outside one of the surgeries where the trial is taking place, then blocked roads at the busy Old Street junction.

One activist dressed as hated Tory axeman Iain Duncan Smith in a doctor's white coat giving out bogus prescriptions (see picture).

Groups including Dpac and the Unite union have



'IDS' joins the protest

PICTURE: PAULA PETERS

called a day of protests against benefit sanctions for Wednesday of this week.

Sanctions can snatch away people's benefits for weeks or even months.

Gill Thompson's diabetic ex-soldier brother David Clapson died starving and destitute after his benefits were cut off for missing a meeting.

She is to hand in a petition to the Department for Work and Pensions calling for an inquest.

TRANSPORT WORKERS

New dispute at Tube Lines

RMT UNION members employed by London Underground have accepted bosses' offer on the Night Tube operation by 84 percent. The vote follows the suspension of strikes in January after bosses made concessions.

New rosters imposing unlimited nights and weekend working were dropped, the pay offer was improved and hundreds of new Night Tube posts created.

The Aslef union's Tube drivers' ballot on the same deal ended on Monday of this week.

United walkouts by all four Tube workers'

unions last summer forced London Tory mayor Boris Johnson to retreat.

But London Underground maintenance, upgrade and emergency workers employed by Tube Lines have not been offered the same deal.

The RMT has rejected a deal there that brings in the principle of 24-hour running any night of the week not just the Friday and Saturday of Night Tube.

Tube Lines bosses have not committed to creating new Night Tube posts and expect all staff to work on it.

The union has declared a new dispute over pay, Night Tube and pensions.

OBITUARIES

Ian Wallace 1952-2016

IAN WALLACE has passed away in hospital after a long fight against illness.

His illness severely restricted his abilities over the last years and led many comrades and activists to ask after him.

We first met Ian in the late 1970s. He appeared with a shock of blonde curly hair, a bicycle, a flask of tea, a roll up ciggie and a pile of Socialist Workers.

He also had an optimism and enthusiasm for a fight to change the world that never left him.

During the 1980s Ian's commitment to fighting injustice could be seen in his



Ian Wallace

activity around The Right to Work Campaign and the Anti Nazi League.

Although he trained as a social worker he would not conform to the role.

He worked initially with meals on wheels, then for many years he was a childcare assistant in a special school.

Ian was dedicated to

improving the lives of the children and as a shop steward and activist.

He was particularly proud of his involvement in a successful strike of council nursery nurses which improved the conditions of low paid women workers.

Ian was central to building his local anti poll tax group and later Stop the War.

He had a tenacity and will which could be infuriating if you were on the wrong side of them.

Ian was never afraid of an argument nor lacked the audacity to intervene.

He had a wry and sometimes surreal sense of humour. There was always a meal and a laugh to be had at Ian's. He remained well known through campaigns,

selling Socialist Worker, driving his motability scooter everywhere possible with the latest SW placard on the back. He joined the Freedom Riders' struggles in South Yorkshire.

Ian was a friend of the oppressed and a unique character. He made a unique contribution in an ever more dangerous world.

His contribution to the struggle will be remembered by many and missed in the future.

Trevor Goodfield and Jay Williams

Ravi Jamieson 1966-2016

RAVI JAMIESON, a dear friend and comrade, has passed away after a short battle with

cancer. He was 49 years old.

Ravi was an extremely dedicated comrade, with exceptional knowledge of class history and the struggles within it.

His passion for justice and opposing all forms of oppression were integral to his character.

He was a modest and honourable person.

He fought tirelessly for the freedom of Palestine, the defence of asylum seekers and against all war, along with many other struggles.

Ravi will be greatly missed by his family, friends and comrades.

He was buried with his beloved grandfather's ashes, the renowned historian and Trotskyist, Sam Bornstein.

Katie Petch

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

March for libraries as new strikes loom

by RAYMIE KIERNAN

THE BATTLE against library cuts in the Labour-run south London borough of Lambeth is **hotting up**.

A 500-strong demonstration last Saturday kept up the defence of the borough's ten libraries—and new strikes are coming.

The libraries would either close or turn into gyms under the Labour council's plans.

Unison union library rep (pc) Tim told Socialist Worker, "We're planning to strike again on 17 March, and want to escalate to two days the following week.

"We'll use our power to stop these library cuts."

Workers walked out unofficially last year and struck again last month.

Lambeth Unison branch is also set to begin consulting its whole council membership over strikes from 14 March.

Council leaders are under pressure from a widespread community campaign. Local library campaign groups have united across the borough.

Social

Claire said, "Libraries are an important social space. I go to the Carnegie Library every Friday morning with my two year old toddler."

Michaela from the West



MARCHING TO defend Lambeth's ten libraries last Saturday

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Norwood campaign group, added, "The councillors think libraries are just a selection of books.

"They don't understand that they're a lifeline for families that don't have money."

Ella, who is "only just 11", asked the rally on Saturday, "What will happen when the libraries are gone? Where

will we get our knowledge from?"

Writer and local resident Will Self attacked the council's plan for gyms for "well-toned banker wankers cycling to nowhere".

Claire said, "We're prepared to do anything it takes to defend our local library."

Michaela argued that

campaigners must step up their action as library workers have.

"When they come to lock the doors we are going to sit in and refuse to go."

●Send solidarity messages to jrogers@lambeth.gov.uk

Gallery of photos from the demonstration at bit.ly/1RwPwPU

CCTV WORKERS



Solid picket lines in Glasgow

PICTURE: DUNCAN BROWN

CCTV strikers in Glasgow keep an eye on the bosses

GLASGOW CCTV workers struck for 48 hours last weekend in a fight over unsocial hours pay.

The Unison union members are demanding to be paid the same as other workers at council-owned firm Community Safety Glasgow.

They are on similar shift patterns but are paid £7,500 a year less.

As one Glasgow Unison branch officer told Socialist Worker, "These workers don't get a penny of out of hours pay, but they are sitting next to council employees who do."

The CCTV workers get no extra money on top of their £8.25 hourly rate for working 12-hour shifts, 24 hours a day.

The strike was solid and more workers joined the union to go on strike. The union now has 100 percent of the workforce.

They are set to strike again from 7pm on 17 March for another 48 hours.

The CCTV workers deserve support from across the trade union movement in their dispute.

●Send solidarity messages to enquiries@glasgowcityunison.co.uk

FIGHTING THE CUTS

Labour council split on cuts

TRADE UNIONS were set to protest this Thursday outside Glasgow City Council's budget-setting meeting.

The Labour-run council will choose whether to push through over £80 million in cuts this year.

Unions are demanding a no-cuts budget. For once, they may have allies inside the Labour group.

A council insider told

Socialist Worker, "There is a group around the former council leader who favour making cuts. There's a group who want a legal no-cuts budget and there's a group around the current leader Frank McAveety that hopes for a compromise."

Labour councillors face losing control of Glasgow council next year for the first time in decades.

HILLSBOROUGH INQUESTS

Match commander admitted to mistake

by SADIE ROBINSON

HILLSBOROUGH match commander David Duckenfield accepted that it was a mistake not to close the tunnel to pens 3 and 4, a court has heard.

Coroner Sir John Goldring is summing up evidence given to fresh inquests into the deaths of 96 Liverpool football fans.

The fans died after a crush in pens 3 and 4 at Sheffield's Hillsborough stadium in April 1989.

Duckenfield ordered a gate open to allow fans into the ground after a crush built up outside the Leppings Lane turnstiles.

The coroner reminded the court that David Duckenfield said his mind "went blank"

when the gate opened.

Duckenfield said he was "overcome, probably with the emotion of us having got into that situation".

Sir John Goldring told the jury, "He agreed that the most likely route for fans would be through the tunnel."

Duckenfield had told the court that it was "arguably one of the biggest regrets of my life, that I did not foresee where fans would go".

Sir John said, "He said the possibility of overcrowding in the pens did not occur to him. He accepted that it was a mistake not to have taken steps to close the tunnel."

Duckenfield previously told the inquests, "If I had been a knowledgeable, experienced match

commander at Hillsborough, it should have been expected of me to know that. But sadly I wasn't."

The coroner said Duckenfield did not consider how many more fans had yet to arrive at the Leppings Lane turnstiles. He said Duckenfield "said that having had time to consider it over the years, he most certainly should have done".

The coroner also reminded the jury that Duckenfield did not realise "at any stage" that pens 3 and 4 were full or overcrowded, including when the match was stopped.

The judge is continuing to sum up evidence given to the inquests before the jury retires to consider its verdicts.

RAIL WORKERS

Cleaners take on a filthy low pay deal

RMT UNION members working for outsourcing giant ISS on Virgin East Coast trains were set to strike for 48 hours from 7am this Thursday.

They work out of King's Cross station in central London. The dispute revolves around pay, conditions and health and safety.

The union is calling for other trade unionists to join the picket line in solidarity.

In a separate dispute ISS workers on the Siemens London Midland trains contract were also set to strike for 48 hours this weekend in a long running dispute over pay.

The RMT members voted by 100 percent for strikes to win the Living Wage.

Bosses offered just a 2.25 percent rise in their hourly rate, which would take them to £6.98 an hour.

FIGHTING THE CUTS

Janitors are out for justice

AROUND 130 primary school janitors in Glasgow are set to strike on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of next week.

The Unison union members are in dispute over payments for duties that are dirty, unpleasant and involve working outside on a regular basis or heavy lifting.

Council bosses have refused to pay the janitors

the extra money, which can be worth up to £1,000 a year.

The janitors have been boycotting the duties for the past six weeks and are now escalating to strikes.

Unions have advised staff not to do the janitors' duties during industrial action.

●Send messages of support to enquiries@glasgowcityunison.co.uk

JUSTICE CAMPAIGNS

AN INQUIRY into the death of Sean Rigg in 2008 could lead to cops facing perjury charges.

Sean died of a heart attack at south London's Brixton police station.

The Independent Police Complaints Commission passed the investigation

to the Crown Prosecution Service last Friday.

Police arrested him on an estate in Balham. They claimed they used minimal force. A court heard that cops knelt on Sean's back, punched him repeatedly and held him down with elbows and fists.

Join the march against racism

by DAVE SEWELL

IRAQI TEENAGER Amna fled her home city of Mosul after Isis took control in 2014. Now she is planning to join thousands of others marching for refugees and against racism on Saturday 19 March.

"All I want is to get my family back together," she told Socialist Worker.

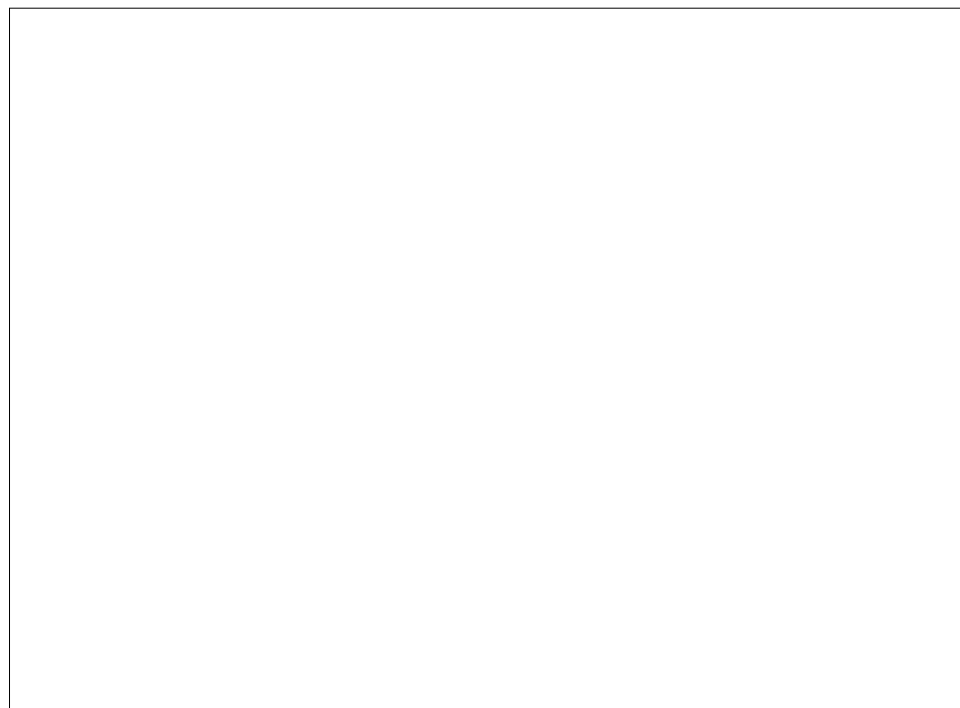
"My dad is in Turkey, where he doesn't have a good life and they won't let him work. Sometimes it makes me feel sick that I can't see him.

"My brother is in Calais, he has been there since October. Britain has done a deal with the French police and that makes it very difficult to get across.

Separated

"I am in London, and my mother and younger brother are in Barnsley. It is the first time we have all been separated. It's very bad and I cry all the time."

Amna had lived for a year in Turkey with her mother and youngest brother before



REFUGEES DEMAND open borders during a protest in Idomeni, northern Greece

the three of them fled to Calais. "It was a disgusting journey," she said.

"I would never want to do it again. It took seven days. I was in the back of a lorry with no food, nowhere to

go to the toilet." After one night in the Calais "Jungle", they were in another vehicle to cross the Channel. It was stopped by police.

Amna made it across alone, with her mother and brother

so does the government.

Amna said, "I was shocked when some awful people on the train started asking why we were here, saying the government should help British people, not us.

"And the Home Office are terrible."

The Home Office rejected her claim for asylum and her mother's. They are both appealing the decision.

Danger

They face real danger if they return. They fled after Isis tried to force Amna's brother, then aged 16, to fight with them. The government insists they can go to Iraq's Kurdish region or the capital Baghdad.

But the war waged by the US and Britain left bitter divisions and a corrupt, repressive regime.

"If we could get a good and safe situation in Iraq we wouldn't have left."

Knowing that there is solidarity makes a difference.

"I found people protesting, saying refugees are welcome, and three times I have gone with them," said Amna. "And of course, I will be there on 19 March."

following a month later.

That was last summer, when tens of thousands of people in Britain were campaigning to support and welcome refugees. But racists want to turn them away—and

End Yarl's Wood shame

PROTESTERS from all over Britain are set to surround Yarl's Wood detention centre in Bedfordshire this Saturday.

Nine coaches were planned from London alone and more from other cities to the isolated refugee prison.

It looks set to be the largest protest out of several called there in recent years.

Rejected asylum seekers are detained indefinitely in Yarl's Wood and other centres.

A report into the Harmondsworth centre by the prisons' inspector last month exposed horrific conditions including overcrowding and cockroaches.

Yarl's Wood is the only centre where women are detained.

Detainees have spoken out about racist and sexual abuse by guards.

But the government is under pressure to reform its inhuman detention system. It was set up in the mid-1990s and is gradually being reduced after campaigners made it an embarrassment for governments.

Big protests can help get rid of this monstrosity completely.

Demonstration—shut down Yarl's Wood detention centre Sat 12 Mar, 1.30pm, Yarl's Wood Immigration Centre, Milton Ernest, Bedfordshire, MK44 1FD. on.fb.me/1nA80Ik

'Big demos will give hope'

THE MAIN slogan of the 19 March protests called by Stand up to Racism is "Refugees Welcome".

But marchers will also be opposing Islamophobia, antisemitism and fascism.

Hundreds of people attended meetings to build the demos last week (see page 7).

In Haringey, north London, writer Gary Younge celebrated the upsurge of pro-refugee campaigns last year and argued that more



Gary Younge

protests could help take on racist scapegoating.

"It's important to come on 19 March and that we have big crowds, because they matter. They give other people hope," he said.

"They give hope to people who are making those journeys in Macedonia and Serbia."

Watch Gary Younge's speech at bit.ly/1QIEZ4F. Details of the demonstrations and rallies on page 12

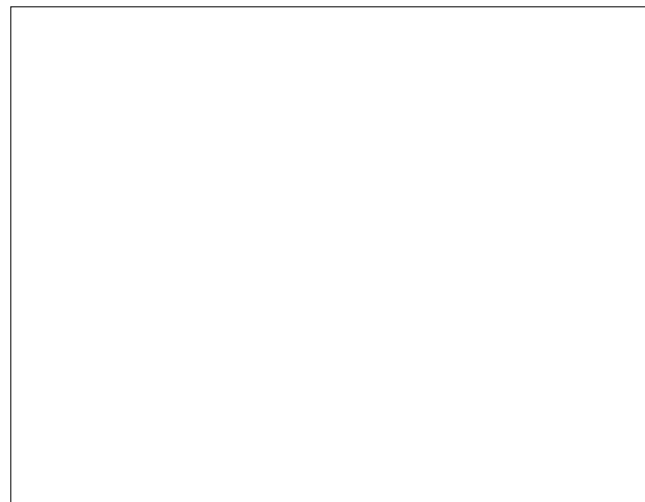
ON THE day before the 19 March demonstrations, European Union (EU) leaders will be hammering out the last details of a dirty deal with Turkey to keep out more refugees.

The deal is to be based on an offer made by the Turkish government at a summit on Monday.

In exchange for bribes from EU members including Britain, Turkey will allow those states to send back any refugees who leave from its shores.

It could mean the mass deportation of refugees from Europe, including more than 30,000 stranded in Greece by border

EU hires Turkey as its brutal new border guard



Turkey's prime minister (left) and the European Council and European Commission presidents are happy to send refugees back to warzones

closures (see page 7).

EU states say that for every refugee sent back from the Greek islands they would take in a refugee from inside Turkey. But this comes with no guarantees.

The EU already has a scheme to resettle 160,000 refugees from countries such as Greece—fewer than 700 people have so far been resettled.

There was rightly outrage around the world at the Turkish government's attack on the media last week. That same government is now being hired by the EU as its brutal border guard.